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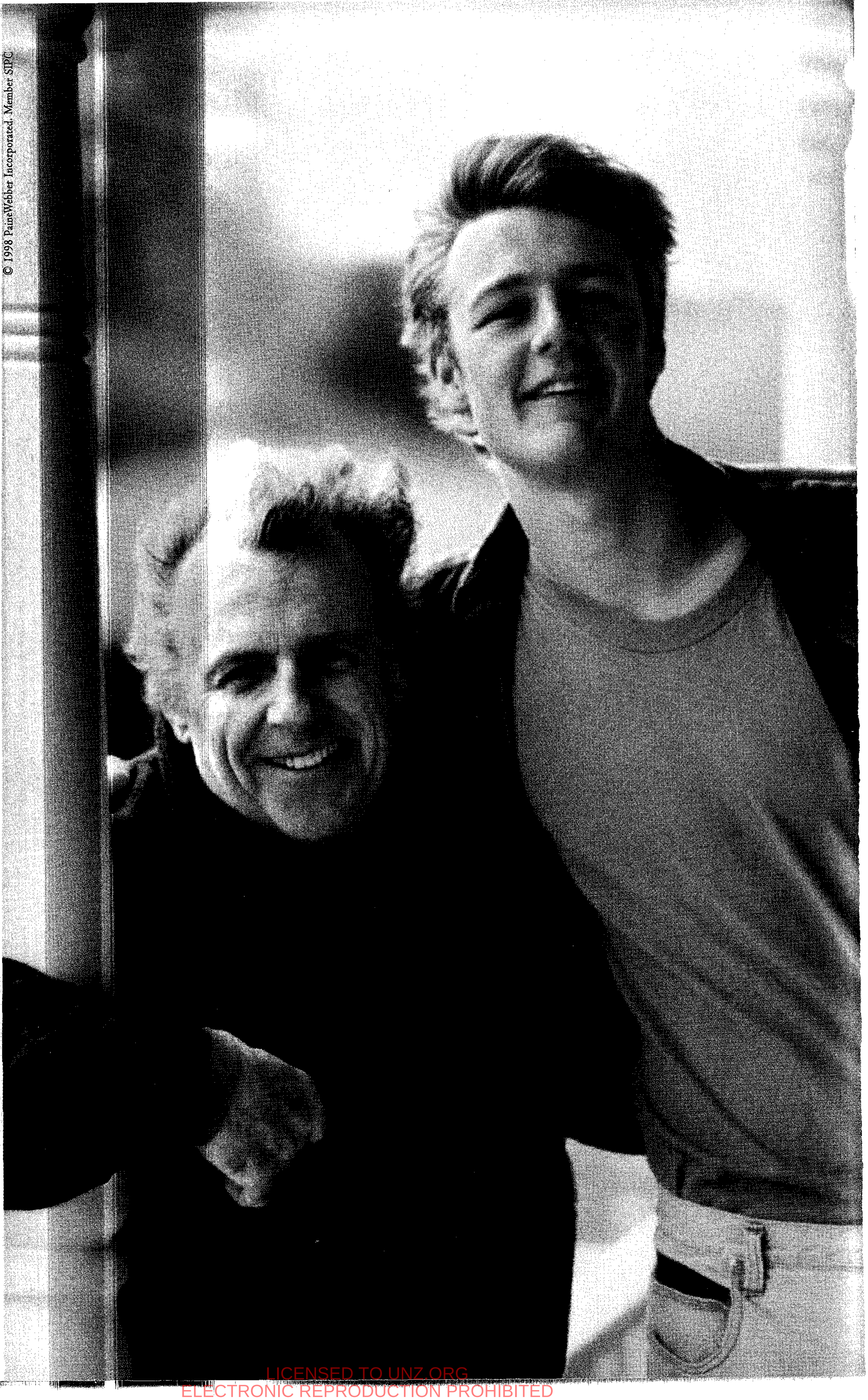
THE NEW YORKER

Nov. 30, 1998



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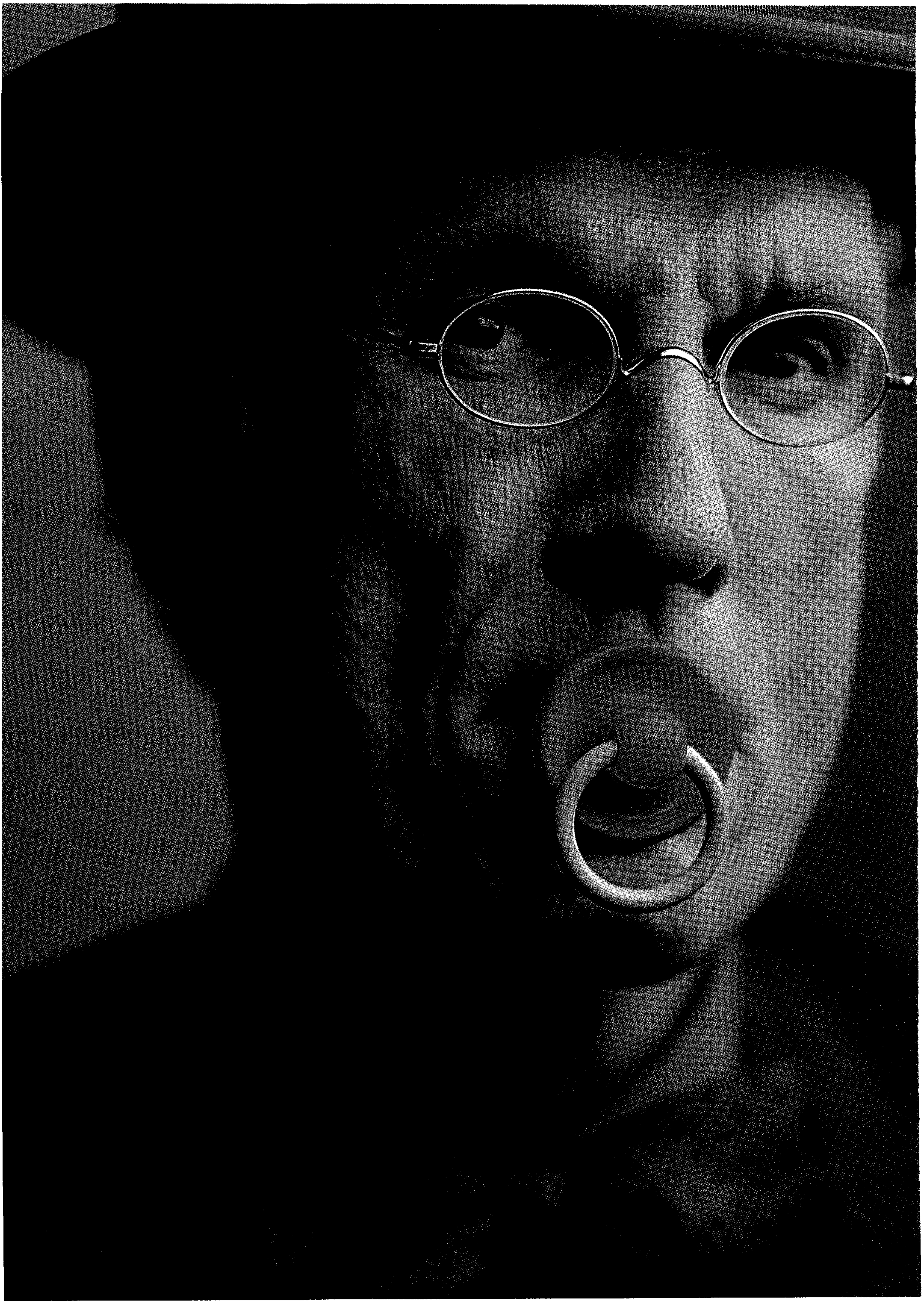

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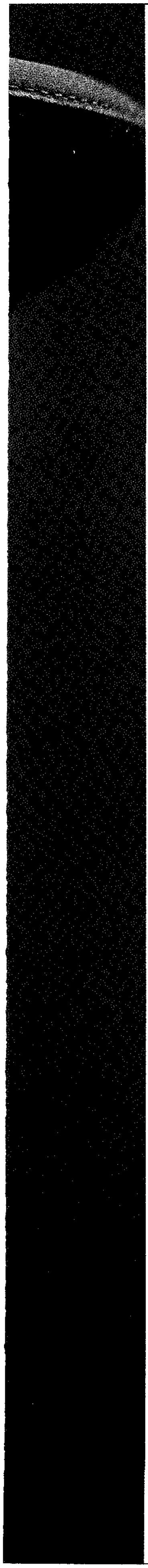

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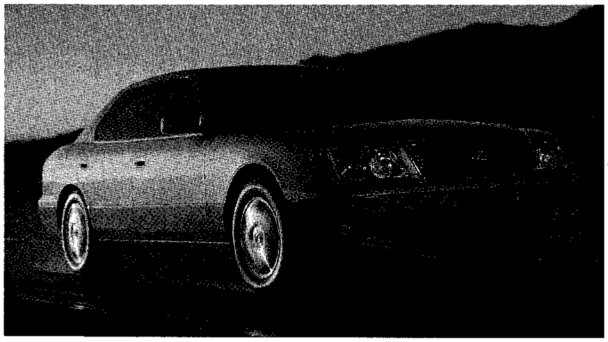

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THE NEW YORKER

NOVEMBER 30, 1998

THE MAIL 8

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 10

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 31
Comment Robert B. Reich on false securities.
Et cetera Tom Wolfe abstains, Harold Bloom doesn't; funny women unite; landmark concrete; George Plimpton's Errol Flynn scale.

DEPARTMENTS

The Political Scene The Lover in Jail . . . . *Jane Mayer* 55
Henry Cisneros, his ex-girlfriend, and a really wild independent-counsel case.

Annals of Animation You Dumb Babies! . . . . *Mimi Swartz* 60
It's not easy being a Rugrats parent.

Shouts & Murmurs Unspoken O'Neill . . . . *Henry Alford* 68

Profile Height of Eloquence . . . . *John Cassidy* 70
Why John Kenneth Galbraith is still worth reading.

A REPORTER AT LARGE Cannibals of the Canyon . . . . *Douglas Preston* 76
Has American archeology's great mystery been solved?

POPULAR CHRONICLES Plant Crimes . . . . *Susan Orlean* 90
Orchids can be the most persuasive of flowers.

FICTION "The Bunchgrass Edge of the World" . . . . *Annie Proulx* 100
A cowgirl in love.

THE CRITICS

A Critic at Large Children's reading . . . . *Joan Acocella* 112
Books "Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898" . . . . . . *Paul Goldberger* 120
Briefly Noted From the Greek 125
Musical Events The truth about Tchaikovsky . . . . *Alex Ross* 126
The Current Cinema "Central Station," "Living Out Loud" . . . . *David Denby* 129

POEMS BY LEONARD NATHAN

"My Kind" 65
"Conversation" 80

CROSSWORD 8 x 10 Cryptic No. 68 131

THE BACK PAGE . . . . *J. B. Handelsman* 132

COVER *Act II, by William Steig*

DRAWINGS *P. C. Vey, Frank Cotham, Charles Barsotti, Danny Shanahan, Sam Gross, Mick Stevens, Robert Weber, Robert Mankoff, Richard Cline, John O'Brien, Bill Woodman, Leo Cullum, Roz Chast, Lee Lorenz, Mike Twohy, Bruce Eric Kaplan*

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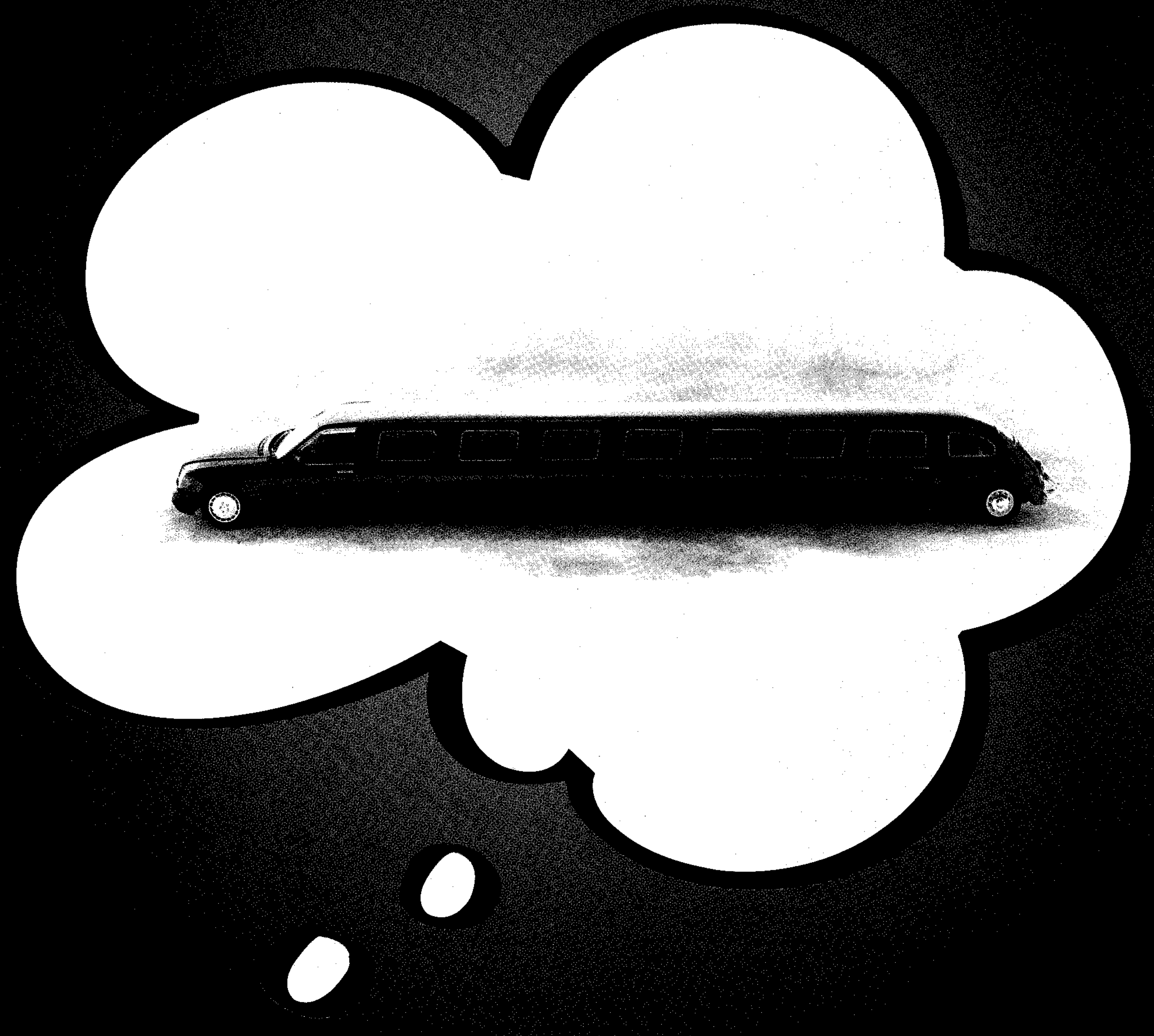

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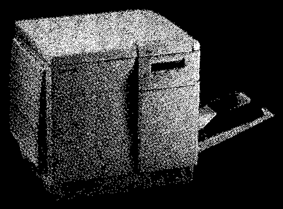

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CONTRIBUTORS

SUSAN ORLEAN ("Plant Crimes," p. 90), a staff writer, is the author of "The Orchid Thief," which will be published in January.

IRVING PENN (Photographs, pp. 90 and 94-95) is working on a book of his still-life photographs and two collections of his drawings.

JOHN CASSIDY ("Height of Eloquence," p. 70), a staff writer, covers economics and finance for the magazine.

DOUGLAS PRESTON ("Cannibals of the Canyon," p. 76) is at work on a new novel, about archeology in the American Southwest.

ANNIE PROULX (Fiction, p. 100) is the author of five works of fiction, including "Close Range," a collection of short stories, which will be published in May.

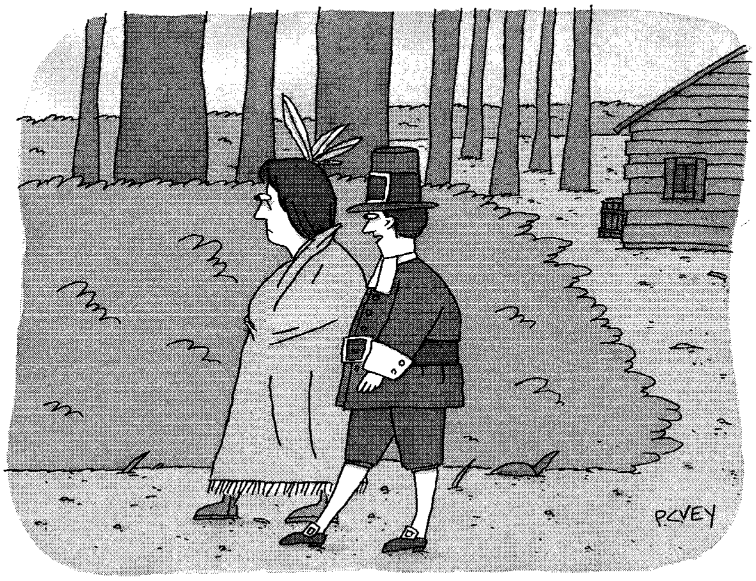
PAUL GOLDBERGER (Talk of the Town, p. 33; Books, p. 120), the architecture critic for this magazine, has written two books on New York City.

JANE MAYER ("The Lover in Jail," p. 55), a political writer for *The New Yorker*, is the co-author of "Strange Justice," a book about Clarence Thomas.

GEORGE PLIMPTON (Talk of the Town, p. 36) is the editor of *The Paris Review*. His most recent book is an oral biography of Truman Capote.

MIMI SWARTZ ("You Dumb Babies!," p. 60) has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1997.

WILLIAM STEIG (Cover) has contributed drawings to the magazine since 1930. "The World of William Steig," by Lee Lorenz, was published this year. ♦



"I love the way you make those yams. You'll have to give me the recipe before your culture is obliterated from the face of the earth."

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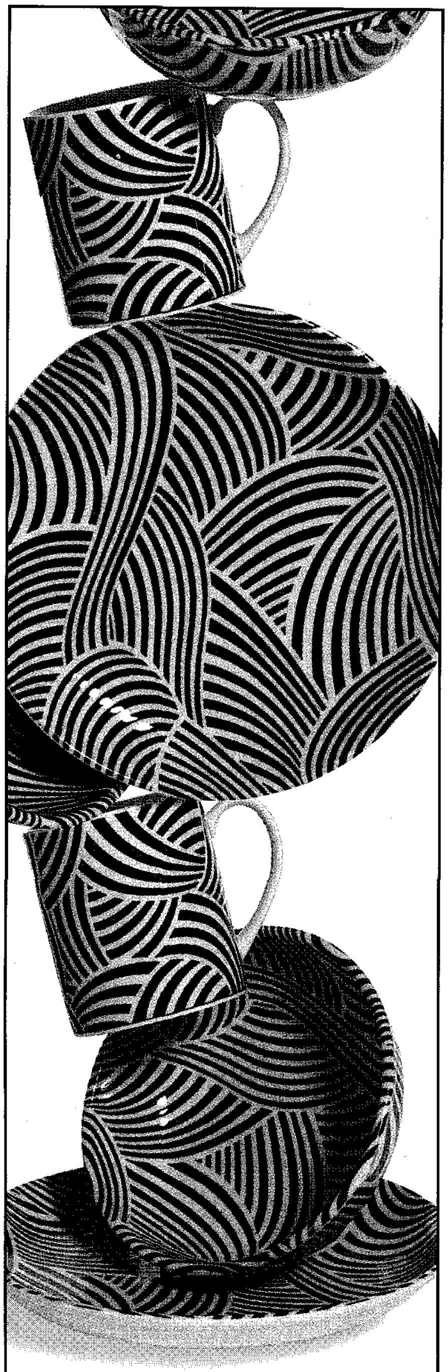
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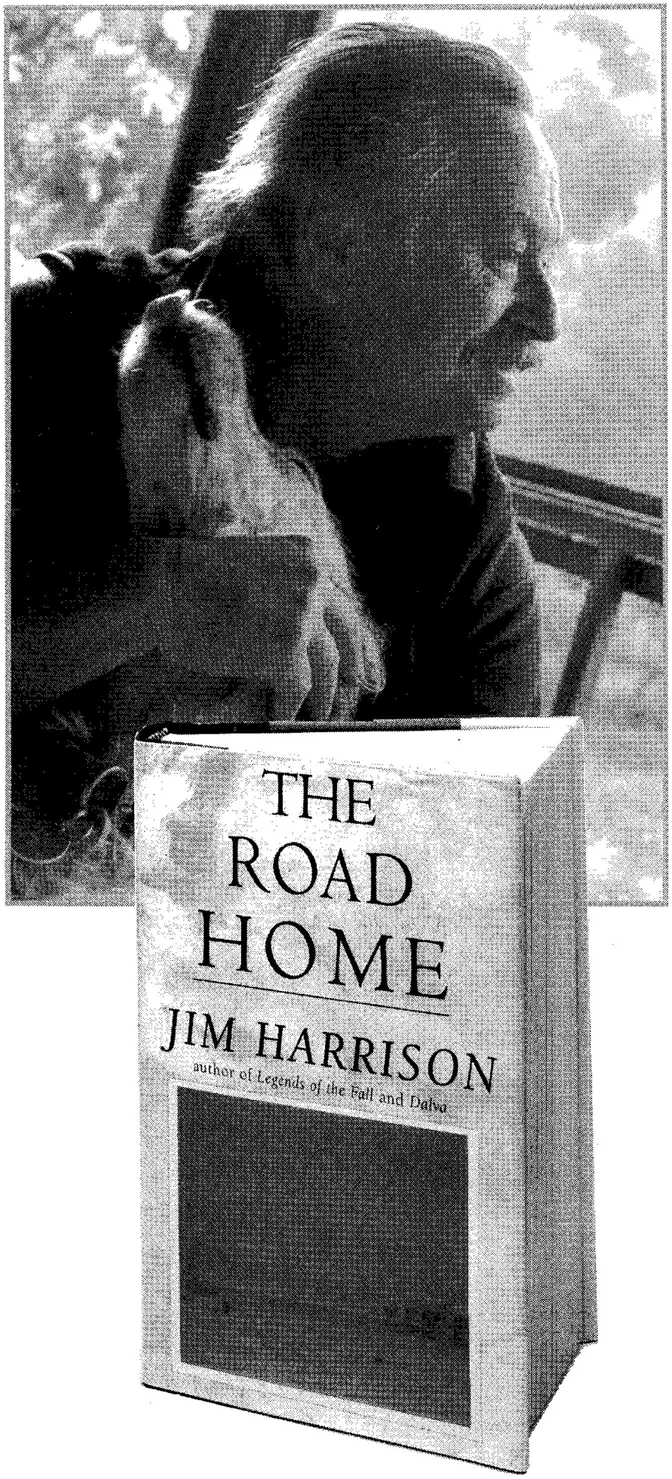
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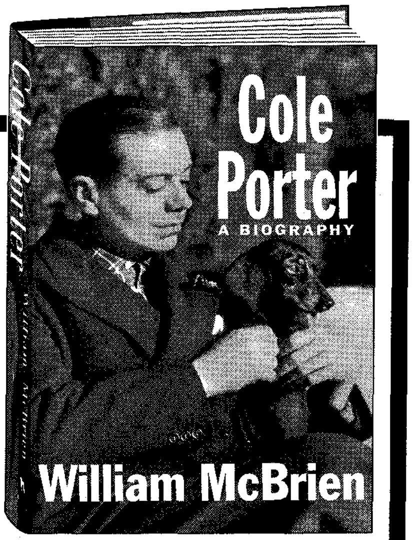

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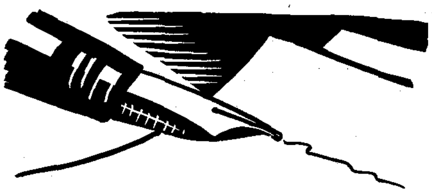

PUNISHING PINOCHET

The arrest of the former Chilean President Augusto Pinochet a few days after the publication of Jon Lee Anderson's Profile of him ("The Dictator," October 19th) raises some new issues. Because the arrest was made by the British police on a warrant from Spain, the most important of these is the hypocrisy of the British and the Spanish governments. It appears as if the two countries were courageously following the moral example of the Nuremberg prosecutors by punishing a dictator who murdered thousands and tortured countless others during his seventeen-year rule, but in reality the only motive behind Pinochet's arrest is the ideological influence of Europe's intellectual left. The fact is that Fidel Castro, another ruthless dictator, was welcomed to the prime minister's palace on a recent trip to Spain, and has for years enjoyed diplomatic relations with Britain. While Pinochet sits under guard in a London clinic, the same governments that have imprisoned him are busily engaging in trade with Castro, who has been personally enriched in the process. If Britain and Spain are to make the world believe that they are setting a new standard for dealing with ruthless dictators, they must first answer the question of why they have imprisoned Pinochet while tolerating Castro's brutal regime.

Pedro Vega
Yonkers, N.Y.

PUNISHING CLINTON

In his Comment of October 19th, Hendrik Hertzberg asks, about the movement to impeach the President, "It must all be about something terrifically important, because otherwise it wouldn't be happening, would it?" The response should be obvious: Yes. It *is* important for the President of the United States to be an honest and decent person.

Boris Zeide
Monticello, Ark.

POLLOCK WAS NO DRIP

In his piece on Jackson Pollock (The Art World, "Poured Over," October 19th), Adam Gopnik repeats the party line that has brought the art world to its current sorry state. Since Clement Greenberg, modern critics have been promoting art in which intellectual gymnastics take precedence over compelling visual expression, and in which quality takes a back seat to "innovation." Thus, according to Gopnik, Pollock's drip paintings are his best work, while his earlier figurative/Expressionist work should be dismissed as derivative and "overwrought." To me, the drip paintings are basically wallpaper, and Pollock's earlier paintings, including "The She-Wolf" and "Guardians of the Secret" (both 1943), are clearly his best work. Like the greatest art of the past, they satisfy a deep human need for myth, mystery, and the expression of powerful emotions—and they're not bad from a technical or a formal point of view either.

Robert D. Cocke
New River, Ariz.

INNOCENTS ABROAD

The complaint of Michael Specter's father that there was no "actual coffee"—American-style coffee—to be found in Italy (Postcard from Rome, "Coffee Clash," October 19th) reminded me of an experience two friends of mine had at a restaurant in Paris. After dinner, they, too, wanted "actual coffee," and demanded, over their waiter's objections, café au lait. Finally, the waiter arched an eyebrow and retorted, "*Avec croissant*?"

William S. Robinson
San Francisco, Calif.

Correction: The artwork, by Susan Hartnett, on page 20 of the November 9th issue was oriented incorrectly; also, it is a pastel on painted paper, not colored paper. We regret the errors.

•

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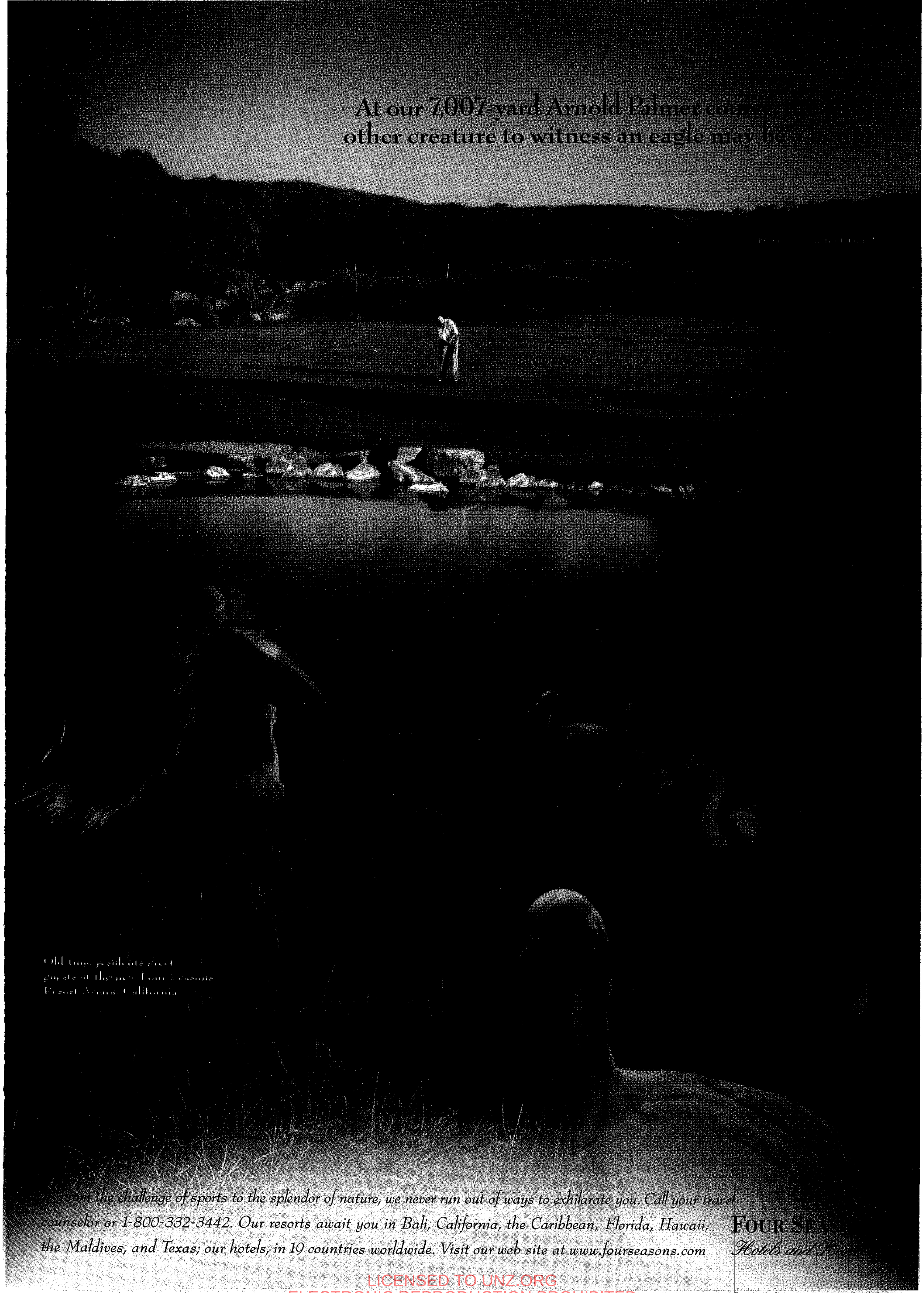

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29	30	1				

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Blue Room—Nicole Kidman and Iain Glen portray five characters each in David Hare's adaptation of Schnitzler's "La Ronde," a series of linked seduction scenes. A Donmar Warehouse production, directed by Sam Mendes. Previews begin Nov. 27. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Bosoms and Neglect—The second offering in the Signature Theatre Company's John Guare season is the playwright's 1979 black comedy. Mary Louise Wilson leads the cast. Previews begin Dec. 1. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Electra—Zoë Wanamaker has the title role in a Donmar Warehouse/McCarter Theatre production of Sophocles' tragedy. In previews. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Freedomland—Amy Freed's new comedy, about a dysfunctional family, stars Veanne Cox as a successful artist who paints hobo clowns. Howard Shalwitz is the director. Previews begin Nov. 27. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Jews and Jesus—A musical comedy about interfaith relationships, with a book by Oren Safdie and music and lyrics by Ronnie Cohen. An ensemble comprising members of the Klezmatics and the Paradox Trio provides the accompaniment. Previews begin Nov. 27. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

Mercy—Laura Cahill's drama centers on the lives of four young Manhattanites. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told—A fresh version of a very old tale, by Paul Rudnick. Joanna Adler, Lisa Kron, Amy Sedaris, and Alan Tudyk are in the cast. Directed by Christopher Ashley. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Parade—The story of Leo Frank, a Northerner wrongly convicted of murdering a child in the South in 1913, is the basis of a musical by Alfred Uhry (book) and Jason Robert Brown (music and lyrics). Directed by Harold Prince. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Spread Eagle—Brian Murray portrays an acclaimed British actor who leaves the stage for a life in Mexico, in a dark comedy by Jim Luigs. In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Stop Kiss—Diana Son's romantic comedy takes place in the aftermath of a kiss between two women. Jo Bonney is the director. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All Under Heaven—Valerie Harper portrays Pearl Buck in a drama about the author's life, co-written by Ms. Harper and Dyke Garrison. (Century Theatre, 111 W. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Americana Absurdum—Brian Parks's lampoon of American culture. Nov. 25-28 at 8. (Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St. 420-8877.)

August Snow and Night Dance—Repertory stagings of two plays—one set in 1937, the other in 1945—about a North Carolina family, by the novelist Reynolds Price. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231.)

Carry the Tiger to the Mountain—A drama inspired by the story of Vincent Chin, a Chinese-American who was murdered by unemployed auto workers in Detroit. Written by Cherylene Lee and presented by Pan Asian Rep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes Dec. 5.)

Chère Maître—A dramatic reading of correspondence between George Sand and Gustave Flaubert, presented by Irene Worth and Peter Eyre. Wednesdays through Sundays, through Dec. 20. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-0051.)

Collected Stories—Despite a splendid performance by Uta Hagen, as an aging writer who tells her protégée (Lorca Simons) the one story about her own life which she hasn't written, this revival of Donald Margulies's 1997 drama only points out how poorly constructed the relationship between the two women is. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Communicating Doors—A wonderful farce with a fairy-tale ending, by Alan Ayckbourn. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 13th St. 239-6200.)

Corpus Christi—Terrence McNally's new play, which tells the story of a homosexual Christ-like figure, travelled a rough road before its opening. (The production was cancelled briefly after religious groups protested and the Manhattan Theatre Club staff received death threats.) Now here it is, and a monumentally unrewarding piece of work it is, too. McNally has squandered the wealth of some very promising themes: in two (very long) hours, he manages to trivialize both sexual and religious persecution. While protesters outside the theatre despair of McNally's soul, audience members who have witnessed his plentiful gifts in the past may despair of his imagination. Slackly directed by Joe Mantello. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/26 & 11/2/98.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Nov. 29.)

De La Guarda—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

Duet! A Romantic Fable—The Adobe Theatre Company's amiable spoof of all things fifties, from lounge acts to monster movies to overwrought dream sequences. The cast is charming, and the direction is not overwhelming—a big step in the right direction for Adobe. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

Eight!—A one-man musical portrait of Henry VIII, written by and starring Steeve Arlen. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 279-4200.)

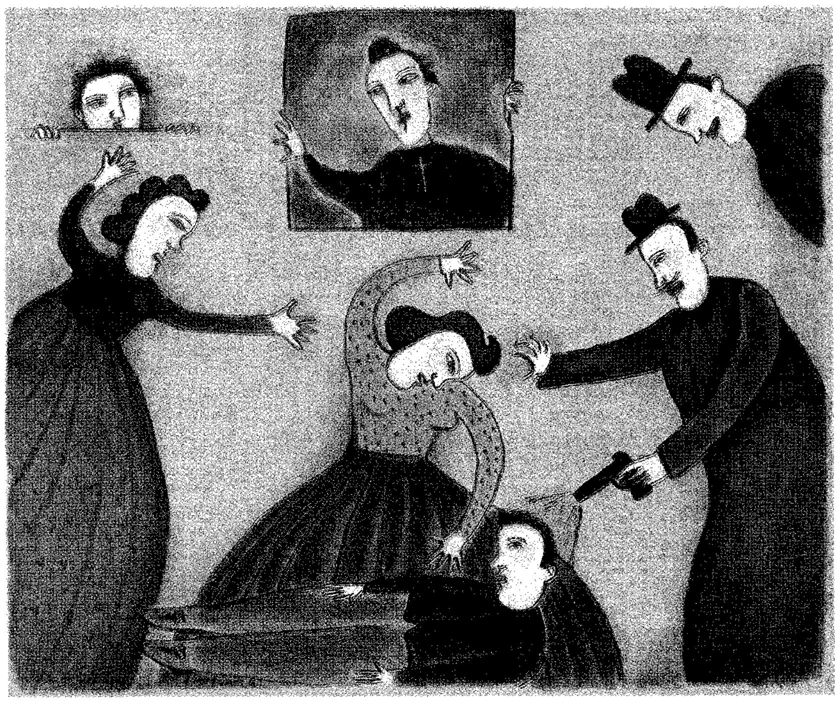
Fool Moon—Clowning and music with Bill Irwin, David Shiner, and the Red Clay Ramblers, who return to Broadway for a limited engagement of their 1993 show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Footloose—A musical adaptation of the 1984 film, co-written by Dean Pitchford (who also wrote the screenplay) and Walter Bobbie. With music by Tom Snow and lyrics by Mr. Pitchford. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Getting and Spending—Broadway is too much with us; evening and afternoon, / Waiting for the ending, we lay waste two full hours: / Little we see on the Stage that is ours; / We have given sixty dollars away—for someone, a sordid boon! (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

100 Years of Lorca—Three of the Spanish playwright's works, "The House of Bernarda Alba," "As Five Years Pass," and "The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife," performed in repertory. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Nov. 29.)

Impossible Marriage—Holly Hunter leads the cast of Beth Henley's new drama, set in Savannah, about a young woman's marriage



Boucicault's "The Shaughraun," at the Irish Repertory Theatre.

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to a philandering older man. Stephen Wadsworth is the director. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!—If you're not ambivalent about Sandra Bernhard's new show, you may have missed the point: she's spent her career keeping us guessing about her motives and sincerity, and it's still interestingly hard to tell where the commentary on celebrity narcissism ends and the narcissistic celebrity begins. What stands out in this show, Bernhard's first on Broadway, is her mastery of the emotional hairpin turns in her material—a tender moment can become a hilarious monster-diva moment in seconds—and her terrific, strong singing voice. What more can you ask for? (11/16/98) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—The company presents Joe Orton's "Loot" in repertory with Ionesco's "Rhinoceros." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Killer Joe—In Tracy Letts's graphic dark comedy, an American family striving for a better life—in this case, a bunch of losers living in a trailer outside Dallas—hires a hit man to help things along. Though the experience sometimes feels like being trapped in Sam Shepard's claustrophobic Nowheresville while being smacked around by Quentin Tarantino, the terrific production is so vividly unself-conscious that you hardly feel assaulted at all—in fact, you enjoy it. Scott Glenn and Amanda Plummer are billed as the stars, but the whole cast is excellent. Wilson Milam is the director. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

Krapp's Last Tape—Beckett's 1958 one-act, presented by the Irish Repertory Theatre. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Nov. 29.)

Little Me—Martin Short and Faith Prince star in a revival of the 1962 musical comedy by Neil Simon (book), Cy Coleman (music), and Carolyn Leigh (lyrics). Direction and choreography are by Rob Marshall. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

The Memory of Water—Or, "The Memory of Orton, Ayckbourn, and Nichols." In the English playwright Shelagh Stephenson's play, three lonesome sisters assemble at their mother's funeral, where, as usual, the ghost has all the best lines. The expert Suzanne Bertish leads a good cast, but the work itself is too callow to properly mix the potent cocktail of high jinks and heartbreak. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

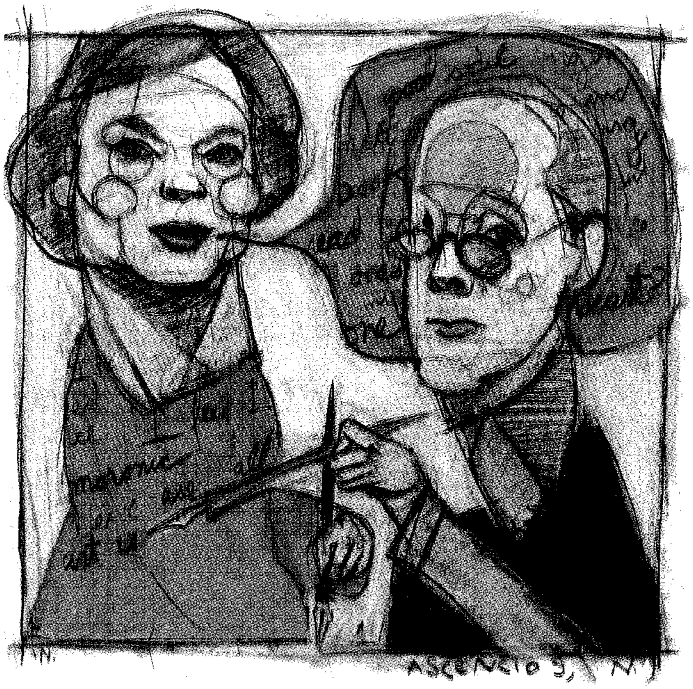
The Miser—A Pearl Theatre Company staging of Molière's comedy. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Dec. 6.)

The Mystery of Irma Vep—It's not difficult to imagine what made this farce a hit back in 1984: the play's author and original star, the immensely gifted Charles Ludlam, who died in 1987 of complications due to AIDS. As staged and performed by that production's co-star, Everett Quinton (whose big, mournful face is just made for the movies), this version ends up a bore, despite its fairly outré conceit—"Rebecca" meets Agatha Christie meets pure camp. The quick-change business of Quinton and the energetic Stephen DeRosa (they each play at least four parts) distracts you from the occasional lame joke, but not from the strained archness and the fact that there's nothing cutting-edge going on. Drag has been out of the closet for a long time now; this is a relic of a more innocent time. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

A Night in November—A one-man drama starring Dan Gordon and written by Marie Jones, which is set on the night of the 1994 World Cup qualifying soccer match between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 4.)

Nunsense A-Men—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Old Settler—Leslie Uggams and Godfrey L. Simmons, Jr., portray a pair of mismatched lovers in 1943 Harlem. The play, written by John Henry Redwood, has fine characterizations and delightful jokes, but the structure is predictably melodramatic, and Mr. Redwood tosses in so many details about the neighborhood and the times that he occasionally leaves his actors stranded in a morass of facts. Nevertheless, the whole cast (which includes Lynda Gravátt and Rosalyn Coleman), under the strong direction of Harold Scott, overcomes it all. And the pairing of Ms. Uggams' deft radiance with Mr. Simmons' eager charm is a pleasure to see. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)



Irene Worth and Peter Eyre, in "Chère Maître."

N. ASCENCIOS

On the Town—The New York Shakespeare Festival's revival of the 1944 Comden and Green classic makes its move to Broadway. George C. Wolfe is the director. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Over the River and Through the Woods—In Joe DiPietro's new comedy, a young man planning his future clashes with his four Italian-American grandparents. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Peter Pan—Former Olympic gymnast Kathy Rigby returns to the title role of the 1954 musical. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Primary English Class—Gerald Gutierrez directs Israel Horovitz's 1976 play, which stars Didi Conn as a total-immersion English teacher. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

The Ride Down Mt. Morgan—A bigamist (Patrick Stewart) is exposed when his two wives (Frances Conroy and Meg Gibson) visit him in the hospital, in a drama by Arthur Miller. David Esbjornson is the director. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Nov. 29.)

Sakina's Restaurant—Aasif Mandvi plays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

The Shaughraun—The nineteenth-century playwright Dion Boucicault's melodrama, staged by the Irish Repertory Theatre. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Side Man—Warren Leight's astute, elegiac play is a young man's bittersweet homage to his crazy, warring parents and to the mysteries of the jazz life that divided them. The father (played by Frank Wood with superb passive-aggressive vacancy), a big-band trumpet player, speaks articulately in his art but is a kind of zombie at home, which bewilders his son (a charming, laid-back Christian Slater) and drives his wife (Wendy Makkena) to drink. The son serves as a biographer of sorts, whose combined detachment from and involvement in the family is mirrored by the director Michael Mayer's expert staging, as he moves in and out of remembered scenes, alternately commenting on and participating in their chaos. (11/23/98) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Snakebit—A drama by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, staged by Naked Angels. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 479-7304. Closes Dec. 4.)

Spalding Gray—The monologuist returns to P.S. 122 with his work in progress. Continues, Mondays only, through Dec. 21. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Stratford Festival at City Center—The Stratford Festival presents Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing" and Molière's "The Miser" in rotating repertory. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Nov. 29.)

Swan Lake—The British choreographer Matthew Bourne's thrilling, iconoclastic version of the Tchaikovsky ballet takes the story of the troubled Prince who falls in love with a swan out of the realm of the folkloric and into the realm of Freudian nightmare, where obsession substitutes for enchantment. The simple but profound exchange of male for female swans sweeps away in one stroke the hidebound froufrou of the traditional version and releases enormous energy into the music. (10/19/98) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Symphonie Fantastique—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. A peerless, delightful evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

This Is Our Youth—Kenneth Lonergan's highly praised comedy about postadolescent heartbreak, set on the Upper West Side in 1982. His characters are meant to be the by-products of a morally bankrupt culture: they have money, they have a certain raggedy charm, and they can muster a kind of vocabulary. What they don't have in life is a reason to be; what they don't have onstage is a way of compelling our attention. Lonergan, whose script shows real theatrical promise, is good on surface behavior but not on subtext. Everything that is psychologically important happens offstage. Mark Brokaw is the director. (11/23/98) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes Dec. 6.)

Trainspotting—Harry Gibson's 1994 adaptation of Irvine Welsh's novel about a group of Edinburgh junkies. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 239-6200.)

Waiting for Godot—Christopher Lloyd, Tony Shalhoub, John Turturro, and Richard Spore take on Beckett's tragicomedy. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Wit—Margaret Edson's funny, diamond-sharp first play manages to yoke together Donne's "Holy Sonnets" and ovarian cancer to make an original drama about the dignity of the spirit and the failure of modern medicine. Kathleen Chalfant, as the feisty English professor with only two hours to live and so many acid jokes to tell, gives one

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helluva fine performance. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

The Women of Orleans—Kristin Marting's play, set in post-Civil War New Orleans, focusses on the lives and love affairs of four women from different backgrounds. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Zora Neale Hurston—A drama about the black American novelist, folklorist, and playwright. Written by Laurence Holder. Elizabeth Van Dyke has the title role. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DINAH WAS:** Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **POWER PLAYS:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **R & J:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SOUND OF MUSIC:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **VISITING MR. GREEN:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—The company kicks off its fiftieth-anniversary season with a re-creation of its very first opening-night program ("Concerto Barocco," "Orpheus," and "Symphony in C"), followed by a curtain call during which many of the leading City Ballet dancers of the past half century show up for one more bow. (Nov. 24 at 7:30.) Then "The Nutcracker" returns, Nov. 27 at 8, Nov. 28 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 29 at 1 and 5. The holiday classic continues through Jan. 3, with surprise appearances by former N.Y.C.B. greats scattered like sugarplums throughout the run. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 870-5570.)

Jazz Tap Ensemble—The eight-member company marks its twentieth season with the première of "Groove," choreographed by Gregory Hines, and "Noche," choreographed by Lynn Dally and augmented by a video design by Dennis Diamond that projects, among other things, simultaneous closeups of the hoofers' footwork. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 24-25 at 8, Nov. 27-28 at 2 and 8, and Nov. 29 at 2 and 7:30.)

Kim Itoh and the Glorious Future—The Japanese choreographer and his Tokyo-based troupe present "Dead and Alive—Body on the Borderline," a full-length work that uses slow movements to explore the threshold between life and death. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 27-28 at 8 and Nov. 29 at 3.)

"Endangered Species"—The hip-hop choreographer Rennie Harris and his Philly-based company Pure Movement perform their blend of street-dance moves (pop, step, lock, electric boogaloo) in such works as "March of the Antmen" and "P-Funk," an evocation of murdered dancers who are "funked-ified" by their colleagues onstage. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 27-28 at 8:30 and 11 and Nov. 29 at 8:30)

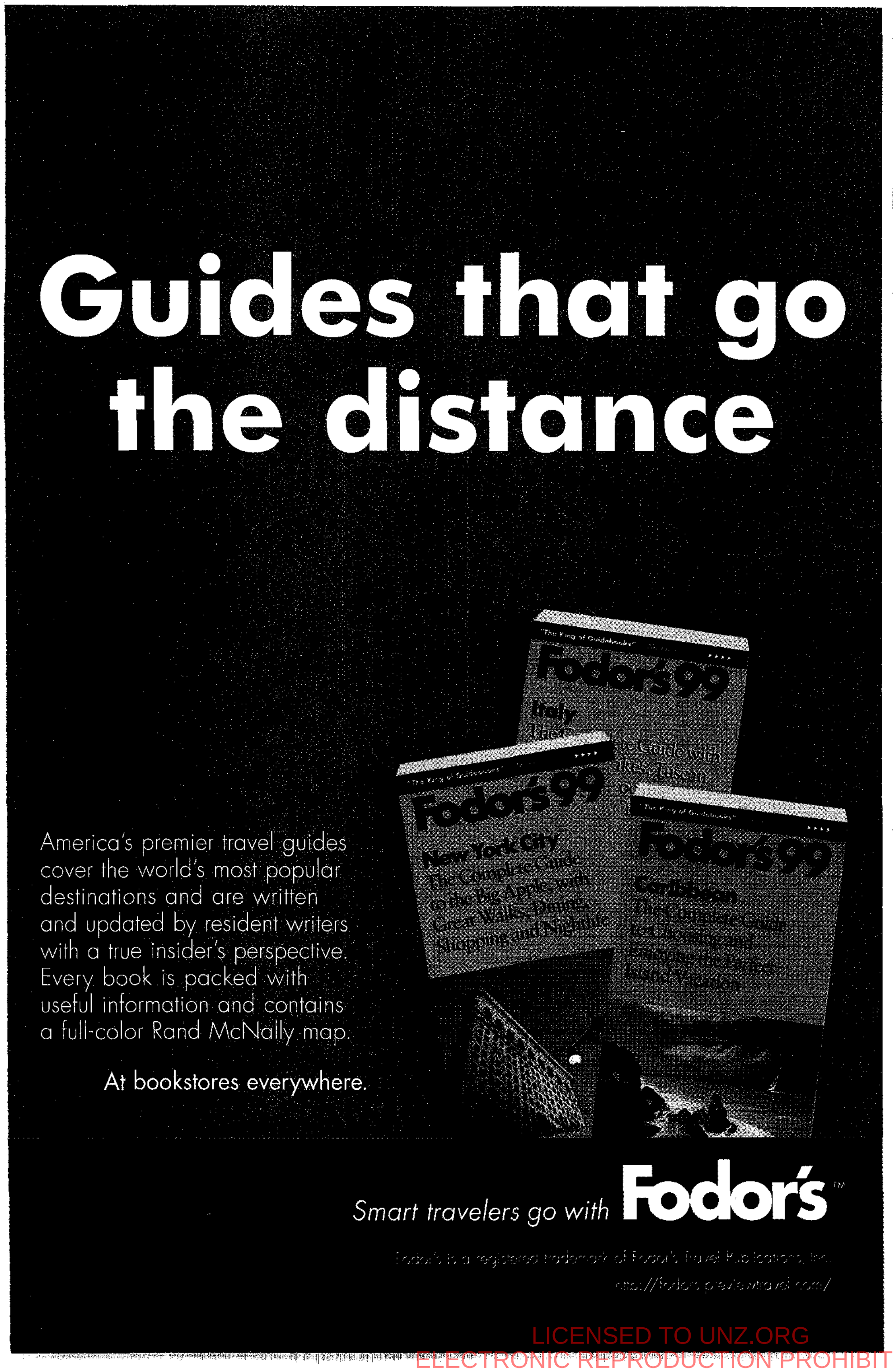
NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Underworld—Though the promised electronica revolution failed to arrive, the second wave of knob-twirling warriors produced at least three electrifying bands: the Prodigy, who push buttons with a punk ethos; the Chemical Brothers, who brought lanky funk to digital disco; and Underworld, who specialize in computer-generated aural ecstasy. Live, Underworld offers a visceral multimedia experience, with oscillating strobes, pounding bass drums, and hallucinatory visuals. And you thought androids didn't dream. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Nov. 25 at 9.)

Lynne Arriale—Solid, mainstream piano is in good hands with Arriale, whose latest album, "A Long Road Home," is well worth a listen. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9480. Nov. 27 at 5:30.)

Home for the Holidays—Brand Nubian, Noreaga, and a host of other local hip-hop stars serve up a post-stuffing-and-gravy bass-heavy feast for the ears. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Nov. 27 at 7 and 11.)



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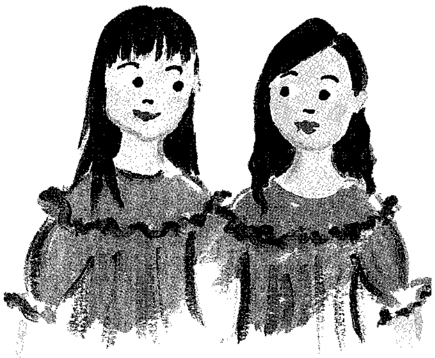
Kiss—The favorite sons of Flushing, Queens, in full-makeup froth. (Nassau Coliseum. 212-307-7171. Nov. 27 at 8.)

Blues Traveler—The jam-happy, harmonica-driven combo, released from the administrative shackles of the H.O.R.D.E. festival, lets down its hair. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Nov. 27-28 at 8.)

The Tragically Hip—The Canadian rock quintet that's an arena-size phenomenon at home continues its struggle for Stateside success. Their eighth album, "Phantom Power," and relentless touring have given them at least a brief reprieve from the barroom circuit. (Hammerstein Ballroom. Nov. 28 at 9.)



ELIZA GRAN

PLUM ROLES: *As soon as City Ballet's "Nutcracker" begins its annual run this Friday, many little girls who dream of tutus and toe shoes will find their career goals coming into sharper focus: what they really want to be is Marie. And why not? It's Marie's party, Marie's presents, Marie's spotlight. Her steps are not the most sophisticated ones given to the School of American Ballet students—those belong to the Candy Canes and the little imps beneath the skirts of Mother Ginger—but it doesn't matter. For the next month, whoever plays Marie becomes a mini Suzanne Farrell. This year's Maries are ten-year-old Meredith Deane, from the Upper East Side, and eleven-year-old Jan Burkhard, of Piscataway, New Jersey, who alternate in the role. One inspiring note for those who hope to succeed them: earlier this month, the company promoted Jennie Somogyi (Marie, '87) to soloist.*

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Nov. 25-27: **JAZZ IS DEAD.** At their best, the Grateful Dead approached the improvisational fluency of a fine jazz ensemble, so it's only natural that jazz-leaning fusioneers would have something to say about the Dead's music. The players include one-time Weather Report bassist Alphonso Johnson, Mahavishnu Orchestra drummer Billy Cobham, Dixie Dregs keyboardist T Lavitz, and Jimmy Herring, the guitarist for Bruce Hampton's Aquarium Rescue Unit.

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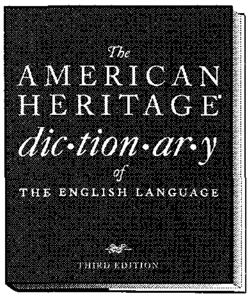

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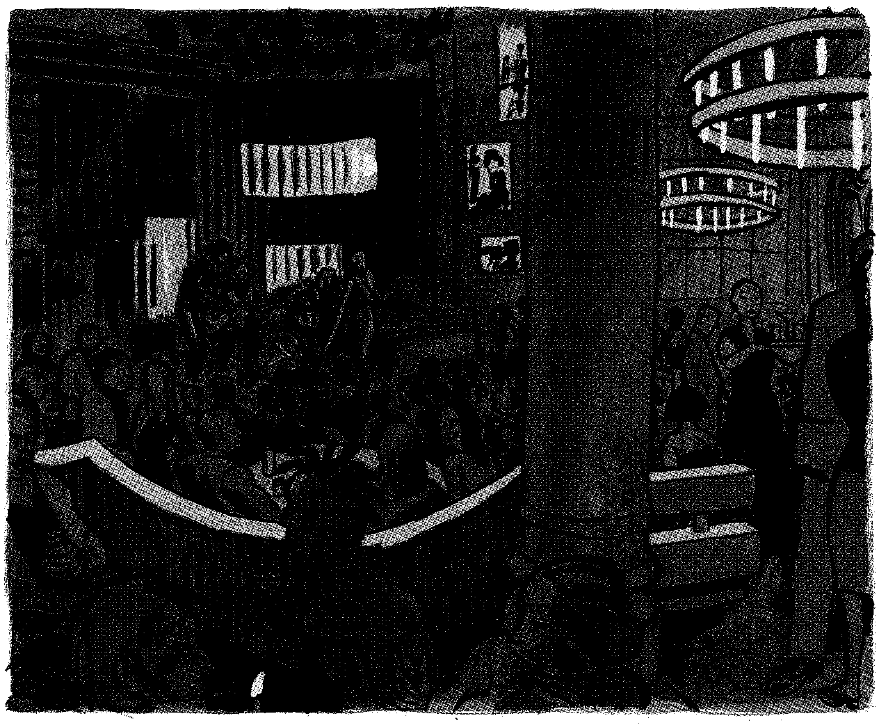
Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—The most convincing of the cocktail-lounge sophisticates, **COMBUSTIBLE EDISON** (Nov. 28) makes music that's a kitschy libation consisting of equal parts vibraphone, organ, melodica, bossa-nova bongos, surf guitar (played by a besuited James Bond type called the Millionaire), and torchy vocals courtesy of Miss Lily Banquette. Its latest album, "The Impossible World," is a top-shelf offering.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Nov. 27-28: Former Muddy Waters sideman pianist **PINETOP PERKINS.**

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Nov. 25: Run-of-the-mill New Orleans rockers **COWBOY MOUTH,** with the **GETAWAY PEOPLE,** a funky, sample-heavy quintet from Norway. No, really, they're worth the price of admission. Nov. 27: **HOLLY COLE.** This lithe Canadian chanteuse has spent much of her career injecting eros into other people's material (she once made an entire record of Tom Waits songs, and it sizzled). Here, she devotes a set to holiday standards. Expect lots of melted snow. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (539-8770)—Fall is traditionally the fertile season for new night clubs to open, but there seems to be a drought this year. An exception is at the Public Theatre, which recently turned the administrative offices that were next to its lobby into a new after-dark hybrid: part-time cabaret and part-time night club. Designed by Serge Becker, the mastermind behind Area, M.K., and other seminal New York clubs, the high-ceilinged room, with its suède bar stools, undulating red-velvet-lined walls, and mirrored tables, does double duty—as a space for performers (Tony Award-winning singer Audra McDonald and trumpeter Roy Hargrove have already played its petite stage) and as a haven for such night-club fixtures as John Waters, Jennifer Lopez, and Sean (Puffy) Combs. Even in the current dry climate, Joe's Pub should have no trouble taking root.



At the Public Theatre's new space, Joe's Pub, the night life's the thing.

DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Nov. 27-28: **MARSHALL CRENSHAW,** the onetime great pretender of power pop. His most recent album, "The 9 Volt Years: Battery Powered Home Demos & Curios (1979-198?)," is an amusing but slightly sad offering that includes a scratchy, homespun version of his greatest hit, "Someday, Someway." There couldn't be a more appropriate venue than a back room in Hoboken for trotting out this stuff.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Nov. 25: The **ROOTS** play live hip-hop that's heavier on instruments than on taped samples. Dining.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Nov. 29: **STEPHIN MERRITT,** the majordomo of the ironic synth-pop band Magnetic Fields (and sometime *Time Out New York* pop columnist).

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—The **COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA** has the floor through Nov. 28. The Count himself and the star soloists and arrangers who brought the Basie band fame are a distant memory, but as long as the ensemble, now under the direction of Grover Mitchell, keeps its brass barking and the rhythm airborne, the legacy of Kansas City swing is still intact. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Nov. 26: A salute to **RAY BROWN.** Call them the Monsters of Mainstream Jazz: when it comes to relentless swing and inspired meat-and-potatoes improvisation, bassist Brown, pianist **OSCAR PETERSON,** and vibraphonist **MILT JACKSON** have the market cornered. All three assembled in 1961 for Peterson's album "Very Tall"; whether they revisit the entire recording or ignore it altogether will make little difference—everything these guys touch turns to gold. Nov. 27-29: Brown was there for **DIANA KRALL** when the then unknown Canadian pianist-vocalist was cutting her first disk. Returning the favor, the now firmly established jazz star helps the great bassist complete his week in the sun. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through the New Year, the inimitable **BOBBY SHORT.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** is in attendance.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Nov. 29: **RANDY WESTON'S AFRICAN RHYTHMS.** With one foot in Africa and the other in the Big Apple, pianist and composer Weston combines the lyrical smarts of New York bebop with the rhythmic diversity of the African-American diaspora. Percussive energy mingles with pointillistic poetry in Weston's music, and the results can be bracing; this is world music that never devalues the majesties of its sources. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.** Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Nov. 29: The **ERIC REED** trio. His work with Wynton Marsalis has finally paid off: pianist Reed has developed into an assured soloist and a confident bandleader—someone to keep an eye on.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Nov. 24-25 and Nov. 27-28: Guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI,** to use an Irving Berlin compliment, "just reeks with class." This consummate craftsman can seduce with velvety chords or rumble through a swing chorus with barrelling assurance. With bassist **LINC MILLIMAN** and pianist **RUSS KASSOFF.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Nov. 27-29: With his **TINY BELL TRIO,** trumpeter **DAVE DOUGLAS** scales down his group size but not his ambition. In tossing about new-jazz, Balkan, and classical motifs, Douglas, drummer **JIM BLACK,** and guitarist **BRAD SHEPIK** have developed a musical language that's all their own.

Lenox Lounge, 288 Lenox Ave., between 124th and 125th Sts. (427-0253)—Nov. 27-28: The **CARLOS GARNETT** quartet. Garnett, a fervent Coltrane-inspired saxophonist from the seventies, surfaces with one of the brighter, if more eccentric, lights of the nineties, pianist **JAMES HURT.**

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Dec. 5: The statuesque chanteuse **KAREN AKERS** presides over this plush Art Deco shrine, which is scheduled to permanently close on Dec. 19. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Hilary Kole. Closed Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785) There's an almost sensual pleasure in watching great drummers like **VICTOR LEWIS** (here with his quintet through Nov. 29); every move is smooth, perfectly balanced, and seemingly effortless. For the sublime lift he brings to the bandstand, Lewis's bandmates should pay *him.* Dining.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Nov. 25: **MARC RIBOT Y LOS CUBANOS POSTIZOS.** Appropriating the arrangements of Arsenio Rodriguez and other pre-Castro bandleaders, Ribot's prosthetic Cubans are a postmodern, post-Cold War pleasure.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Nov. 29: The **CLARK TERRY** quintet. Terry is a very funny guy and one of the most sophisticated flugelhorn players and trumpeters around. He came up through the big bands, notably Basie's and Ellington's (where he enjoyed a brilliant stint), and he has a personal style that blurs the lines between swing and its younger brother bop. Terry's also a delightful motormouth, spraying torrents of sound with his instrument, or, if that doesn't do the trick, letting loose a verbal wash of gibberish, jokes, and exultations. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—A young guitarist with flying fingers and a heart filled with bebop, **RON AFFIF** has a regular Monday gig at an intimate space that caters to guitar freaks—just right for a six-string whiz with almost too much to say. Saturdays feature Brazilian jazz.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

(All institutions listed will be closed Thanksgiving Day.)

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Edgar Degas, Photographer." The influence of photography on Impressionist painting has long been established; here Degas seems to be returning the favor, exploiting avant-gardist, painterly effects in the mechanical medium. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ "Donato Creti: Melancholy and Perfection" showcases an early eighteenth-century painter (1671-1749), the last in a line of Bolognese classicists which included the Carracci family and Guido Reni, whose work was forgotten for a century or so and was then rediscovered in the nineteen-thirties. Passionately tradition-bound, he painted twilit mythological figures adorned with putti, rumpled draperies, and carefully polished musculature. Sometimes he was superb. More often, though, Creti's figures project a peculiar torpor that may have more to do with the artist's lifelong insomnia than with his perfectionism. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ "Charles Burchfield from the Collection." Through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ "Félix Vallotton: Woodcuts and Three Paintings." Through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ "Mary Cassatt: Drawings and Prints in the Met," a selection of more than fifty works on paper from the museum's collections. Though many of these images of women reading, dressing, nursing, and feeding ducks are familiar, the fragile originals are seldom on display. The most memorable are often in drypoint, a medium that requires both delicacy and considerable physical strength—not unlike, say, child-rearing. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum." Through Jan. 3. (Open Tues-days through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Jackson Pollock," a comprehensive retrospective—the first in the United States since 1967—of the artist many regard as the most influential American painter of this century. It would be hard to fault the installation or the choice of works: in addition to many smaller drawings and canvases, the Modern has secured all of the major large pictures, from the mural that Peggy Guggenheim commissioned for her foyer in 1943 to the late "Blue Poles" (1952). This show should lay to rest one misconception: that Pollock's volatile life and violent end in a car crash on Long Island exert a more powerful pull than the works themselves. While these events have certainly contributed to the artist's mythos, the pictures speak unequivocally of a revolution in form whose influence can still be felt half a century later. Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ In conjunction with the Pollock show, the drawings department has gathered some eighty works by New York School artists, from early Abstract Expressionist stuff by the young Rothko and Gorky to mature work by Rauschenberg and Johns. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ "New Photography: Jeanne Dunning, Olafur Eliasson, Rachel Harrison, Sam Taylor-Wood," the fourteenth installment of the museum's survey series. Through Jan. 12. . . . "Focus: Pollock and Printmaking." Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ "Dubuffet to de Kooning: Expressionist Prints from Europe and America." Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ "Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles." Through Jan. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Rendezvous: Masterpieces from the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Guggenheim Museums." By combining works from its permanent collection with works from the Pompidou Center in Paris (closed for renovations until Dec. 31, 1999), the Guggenheim has suddenly become an uptown sister to MOMA. Wright's first few ramps now tell the familiar story of modernism, from the Fauves to the Surrealists, but with a fresh sequence of images, many of them dazzling. Higher up, the synergy between the two collections turns to rivalry, as American painting, nonexistent down below, outshines a ragtag collection of Europeans. In the exhibition's final room, Arte Povera and Process Art meet in a slightly forced spirit of rapprochement. Through Jan. 24. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"Premises," a spectacular disaster in which two mediocre exhibitions (one of postwar French architecture, the other of postwar French installation and performance art) collide, to the benefit of neither. Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The Mark Rothko retrospective continues through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ The first full-scale retrospective of the work of Bob Thompson. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ An exhibition of fifty-two Brice Marden drawings from the museum's collection includes large-scale works and small sketches from the artist's workbook. Through March 28. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou" presents an astonishing array of objects—dolls, flags, rattles, pots, calabashes, medicine packets, paintings—more than five hundred in all, which bring to life the vivid history and practice of the Afro-Caribbean religion. Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch" offers some hundred large-scale court and religious paintings, manuscripts, and enamels done in the representational style that flourished under the dynasty that ruled Iran from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "Japonisme in Fashion: Japan Dresses the West." Through Feb. 14. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. (744-8181)—"Chinese Snuff Bottles from the Pamela R. Lessing Friedman Collection" presents more than a hundred examples of the Lieber bag of the Qing dynasty. Through Dec. 6. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—"Claire McCardell and the American Look" brings out the practical ensembles that the designer called "comfort wear": play clothes, "Pop-Over" dresses, swimsuits, sportswear, and wrap-and-tie outfits suitable for the fashionably active American woman of the forties and fifties. Through Jan. 9. . . . ¶ "Rethinking Shearling." O.K. Who'd like to start? Through Jan. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. All are closed Thanksgiving Day; some remain so for the weekend. It's advisable to call ahead.)

Ross Bleckner—Large paintings whose clinical titles—e.g., "Host Population" and "In Replication"—match their cellular, under-the-microscope imagery. Swollen ovals packed with pink polyps, walls of tightly clustered alveoli, capellini-like strings of DNA—all have an insidious exuberance, but it's hard to know whether to cheer or to shudder. Through Dec. 19. (Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. See also Downtown Short List.)

Fernando Botero—Thirty-some canvases depicting life in an imaginary South American town. Prosperous couples stroll with dogs and parasols; toddlers fuss in their nannies'

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AMERICA SWINGS: *From the fifties to the seventies, Lee Friedlander had a great gig, travelling the country and photographing gospel, jazz, R. & B., bluegrass, and country-and-Western musicians for Atlantic Records. The results of this long-running sentimental education are now on view at the Borden gallery (560 Broadway; 431-0166) and, more extensively, in the recently published "American Musicians" (D.A.P.), a handsome volume filled with more than five hundred of Friedlander's images (including Esther Phillips in 1966, above). Here are musicians at work, play, and rest: Aretha Franklin singing in a searing chartreuse turtleneck, Carl Perkins brooding over an acoustic twelve-string, Big Joe Turner belting one out in mid-finger-snap, the entire Basie band sleeping like newborns on their tour bus. From stagy stills to in-the-moment snapshots, all the pictures reverberate with Friedlander's capacity for turning a professional assignment into a mission of joy.*

arms; nude women primp and nap. Like Léger or Jean de Brunhoff (the creator of Babar), Botero loves to pump up the volume, stylizing his characters into deliciously corpulent sumo citizens. But Botero's motives are demonstrably affectionate, and his fantasy of an orderly bourgeois life glows with a sweetly improbable dignity. Through Dec. 5. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.)

Dewitt Godfrey—Godfrey calls his show "A Sculpture and a Drawing," and, sure enough, that's what it is: one fifty-foot drawing (a sort of chaotic family tree) and one two-and-a-half-ton sculpture, a cylinder of Corten-steel strips riveted together, producing an effect that is both louche and butch, like a giant Azzedine Alaïa dress. The big sproingy thing slumps down the center of the gallery, so the only way to look at it is to walk on top of it, down the middle, Red Sea-style. One had stopped expecting much of anything from monumental sculpture, but this work, like Serra's "Torqued Ellipses," proves wry and surprising. Through Dec. 24. (The Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. 879-3500.)

Robert Henri (1865-1929)—Three rooms crowded with glossy, breezy portraits and landscapes by the author of "The Art Spirit." As a teacher, Henri inspired generations of students, including Edward Hopper, George Bellows, and Rockwell Kent. But the master himself, as Hopper dryly noted, was prey to "a certain meretriciousness of brushwork." In Henri's portraits of children, however, his exuberance and sympathy shine through. Through Dec 16. (Owen, 19 E. 75th St. 879-2415.)

John Moore—Radiant, intricate views of Tel Aviv, by a painter who is best known for his cityscapes of Boston and Philadelphia. Moore loves urban sprawl, and he paints it with an almost hallucinatory clarity. The sort of complicated vista we take in at a glance all the time and ignore—boxy apartment blocks, bedraggled palm trees, aisles of rooftops and parked cars—becomes, in his hands, as luminous and stately as a Mondrian. Through Dec. 31. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

Ed Ruscha—A generous sampling of text pictures from the sixties and seventies by the arch and ascetic Los Angeles-based artist. Most feature a single boldly printed word or phrase—"faith," "honk," "pudding," "noise." Though Ruscha's preferred media include blueberry extract and gunpowder, the results are seldom juicy or explosive. Through Dec. 5. (Gray, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 472-8787.)

Short List—**CHARLES BURCHFIELD,** Kennedy, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 541-9600. Through Dec. 31. . . . **WILLEM DE KOONING,** Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 744-7400. Through Dec. 19. . . . **JOHN GIBSON,** Hoff Fine Arts, 52 E. 76th St. 249-5557. Through Nov. 28. . . . **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888. Through Nov. 28. . . . **KÄTHE KOLLWITZ,** Galerie St. Étienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through Dec. 31. . . . **ROY LICHTENSTEIN,** Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. 489-3331. Through Nov. 28. . . . **JOHN MARIN,** York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Through Jan. 8. . . . **HENRI MATISSE,** C & M, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020. Through Dec. 12. . . . **SIGMAR POLKE,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Through Jan. 16. . . . **JACKSON POLLOCK,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. 397-6780. Through Dec. 19. . . . **BOB THOMPSON,** Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082. Through Jan. 9. . . . **IDELLE WEBER,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122. Through Nov. 28.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Eugenio Dittborn—"Taciturna (recent and non-recent air-mail paintings)." Since 1984, this Chilean artist has been making paintings on large sheets of paper or cotton duck, which he then folds and sends through the international mail; it was originally a way to avoid Pinochet-era censorship. Crime and execution are recurrent motifs, but the packaging, and Dittborn's handwritten comments, form as much a part of the work as the contents. Through Dec. 5. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474.)

Monique Prieto—Medium- and large-scale abstract paintings by a leading figure among the new group of color-field painters. The foundations of Prieto's paintings are sketches she renders on a computer—a very new-technology way of updating the most traditional Western pictorial medium. The artist's slack blobs of color rest uneasily one above the other; her color combinations and compositions avoid conventional elegance (very much an issue with the color-fielders of yore), but they're pleasing anyway. Through Dec. 23. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. 727-7366.)

James Turrell—Four meticulously crafted installations by a leading Light and Space artist. The Magnatron series features hearth-like wall apertures that emit a strange flickering glow (in fact, it's the reflection of hidden television sets). Turrell's luminous austerity recalls Rothko's, but without the melancholy; instead, these pieces project a sobering (even tranquillizing), Quaker-like calm. Through Dec. 23. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300.)

Short List—**DOUG AITKEN,** 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through Jan. 16. . . . **CARL ANDRE,** Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 255-1105. Through Nov. 28. . . . **FRANCIS BACON, LOUISE BOURGEOIS,** and **FRANZ XAVER MESSERSCHMIDT,** Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through Dec. 31. . . . **NAYLAND BLAKE,** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Through Nov. 28. . . . **WILLEM DE KOONING,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through Dec. 19. . . . **ARTURO ELIZONDO,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through Dec. 10. . . . **JOANNE GREENBAUM,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through Dec. 23. . . . **LUCY GUNNING,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through Nov. 28. . . . **THOMAS LOCHER,** Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494. Through Jan. 9. . . . **REINHARD MUCHA,** Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through Jan. 9. . . . **TONY OURSLER,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through Nov. 28. . . . **JAMES ROSENQUIST,** Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 929-0500. Through Nov. 28. . . . **GEORGE STOLL,** Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753. Through Nov. 28.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Francis Bacon (1909-92)—A baker's dozen of impressive paintings that turned up after the artist's death. In the most recent work, a triptych from 1991, images of Bacon and an unknown man (perhaps Ayrton Senna, the late Formula One racer) flank a central panel that shows headless bodies coupling in a pitch-black cell. The real energy, however, is in the less overtly sexual paintings from the fifties, where Bacon's long, marvellous brushstrokes conjure single figures—popes, chimps, businessmen. Mouths agape, they seem to be roaring a denunciation of their own solitude. Through Jan. 16. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300.)

Trisha Brown—Brown is best known as a choreographer, but this show of elegant drawings, largely in a Conceptual vein à la Sol LeWitt, makes clear her ties to the wider community of artists of her time. Through Dec. 19. (The Drawing Room, 40 Wooster St. 219-2166.)

Richard Phillips—Oil paintings with neo-Pop subject matter. One highlight: a closely cropped image of Michael Jackson, taken from Jeff Koons's notorious sculpture "Michael Jackson and Bubbles." Through Nov. 28. (Petzel, 26 Wooster St. 334-9466.)

Matthew Ritchie—Absurdly complicated, brightly colored abstractions that illustrate this young British-born artist's sci-fi cosmology. What's appealing isn't so much the specifics of the Dungeons-and-Dragons symbolism as it is one's sense that Ritchie is passionately wrapped up in a vast, nutty enterprise. Through Nov. 28. (Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831.)

Linda St. John—The artist evokes a world of Rust Belt family life—poverty, alcoholism, and blighted love—with deceptively childish means: she uses Cray-Pas crayons and seam rippers to outline Teddy-bearish figures on

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a bender. "Three Ralphs on a Couch," her suite of drawings devoted to three generations of St. John men, displays a powerful mixture of satire and intimacy, as well as plenty of cardboard-cutout Falstaff beer bottles. Through Nov. 29. (Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Open Sundays.)

Andy Warhol (1928-87)—"Camouflage Paintings" (1986), one of Warhol's final series. Until recently, paintings like these haven't received the attention they deserve; they demonstrate that Warhol wasn't only the Pop genius of the early sixties but an artist working on important pictures right up to the end. Through Jan. 9. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828.)

John Waters—"Low Definition," a group of photomontages in which the director (most recently) of "Pecker" continues his juxtapositions of droll and sinister images culled from the movies and elsewhere. For example, one diptych contrasts the collars, viewed from behind, of Dorothy Malone and Charles Manson. And, for those who believe that Waters has softened in his recent movie, check out the really icky and great "Movie Star Junkie." Through Dec. 3. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. 941-0401.)

"The Risk of Existence"—A delightful, idiosyncratic group show, curated by the artist Mark Greenwold. Young hipsters John Currin and Lisa Yuskavage share wall space with outsider artist Henry Darger and a host of eccentrics like Balthus, Bacon, Lucian Freud, and William Blake. At the center of the show is Greenwold's most recent work, a family portrait painted in a style that might be called micro-pointillist Surrealism. Through Dec. 31. (Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200.)

Short List—**john baldessari,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160. Through Dec. 19. . . . **david black,** DFN, 560 Broadway. 334-3400. Through Dec. 5. . . . **ross bleckner,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through Dec. 19. . . . **richard cleaver,** Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. 431-4224. Through Jan. 9. . . . **ford crull,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. 925-3007. Through Dec. 5. . . . **hilda daniel,** First New York: Staff Gallery, 495 Broadway. 925-9700. Through Dec. 23. . . . **willem de kooning,** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Through Dec. 19. . . . **kim dingle,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through Dec. 19. . . . **dinh q. lê,** P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Through Dec. 23. . . . **suzanne mc clelland,** Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219. Through Dec. 31. . . . **kim mac connel,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through Dec. 23. . . . **norm magnusson,** Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway. 941-6355. Through Dec. 23. . . . **mia westerlund roosen,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012. Through Jan. 9. . . . **kara walker,** Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway. 941-6210. Through Nov. 28.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Nov. 25: Latin-American paintings, drawings, and sculptures. . . . ¶ Dec. 1: Coins and banknotes. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.). . . At **christie's east:** Nov. 25: Moderately priced Old Master paintings. . . . ¶ Dec. 1: Collectibles relating to the Wild West, including artifacts from the Little Bighorn battlefield, political documents signed by Wyatt Earp, and the oldest pair of Levi Strauss pants known to exist in private hands (they date from the eighteen-seventies). (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

Sotheby's—Dec 1: An auction of Russian decorative art, including fourteen Fabergé items from the Forbes collection; also a sale of sporting paintings, especially notable for a group of ten oils on horse-racing themes by Sir Alfred J. Munnings. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000. Dec. 1.)

Phillips—American (and some European) paintings, including works by Sargent, Whistler, Glackens, and Lawson. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. Dec. 1.)

Doyle—An auction of antique-toy collectibles that would not look out of place under the Christmas tree. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Dec. 1.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Food for Memory

Forget the turkey. The best Thanksgivings are feasts of memory, with recollections passed around the table as readily as the food: "Remember the year the stuffing gave everyone food poisoning?" "Remember your grandfather's priest-and-rabbi jokes?" "Remember that atrocious boyfriend you brought home two years ago?" And so on.

Battlegrounds of Memory (University of Georgia), by memoirist Clay Lewis, begins with a holiday dinner in 1957, when the author came to blows with his alcoholic father. As Lewis goes on to recount his adult years—his time in the Marines, his relocations and failed marriages—this childhood memory casts a sombre shadow over the rest of his life.

Nicholas Papandreou's first novel, **A Crowded Heart** (Picador), is more luminous in its reflection, if only because much of it takes place along the Aegean coast. Papandreou, the son of the former Prime Minister of Greece Andreas Papandreou, tells the story of a young man looking back on a childhood spent in Greece after his father uproots the family from their California home to return to their homeland and—what else?—run for Prime Minister. Where Proust had his madeleine, this narrator is stirred by fruits of the sea: the scarlet eggs inside a sea urchin, the shimmering curd of a cut-up jellyfish spread across a crusty piece of bread.

Péter Nádas, the author of "A Book of Memories," explores similar territory in **The End of a Family Story** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). First published in Hungary in 1977, this novel centers on the fantastical family stories that a grandfather tells his grandson during the years of Stalinist repression in Hungary—and how these tales give strength to the boy when his apparatchik father is accused of crimes against the state. **Las Christmas** (Knopf) is a timely collection of reminiscences by Latino authors, edited by Esmeralda Santiago and Joie Davidow, that conjure up holiday goings-on in Miami, where snow is sprayed from a can onto sliding glass doors; in the Dominican Republic, where people tango on tabletops and throw themselves into swimming pools on Christmas Eve; and in Puerto Rico, where the Thanksgiving turkey is stuffed with plantains.

RUSSELL CHRISTIAN

Books.
[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

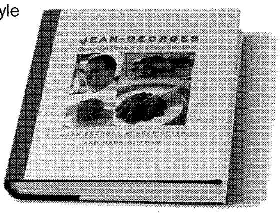
Four-star Cookbooks

JEAN-GEORGES

by Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Mark Bittman

Turn your kitchen into a four-star restaurant with the long-awaited cookbook from the 1998 James Beard Award-winner for Best Chef in America. Jean-Georges combines inspired recipes with innovative techniques to make his intensely flavorful culinary style easily accessible. (Broadway)

Pub. Price: $35.00
Discount 30%
B&N Price: $24.50

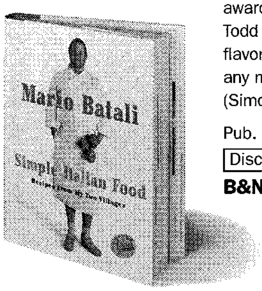


SIMPLE ITALIAN FOOD

by Mario Batali

The owner and chef of the restaurants Pó and Babbo in New York's Greenwich Village reveals more than 200 of his popular recipes. Now a mainstay on television's Food Network, Batali presents a fun celebration of the flavors and spirit of Italy. (Crown)

Pub. Price: $30.00
Discount **30%**
B&N Price: $21.00

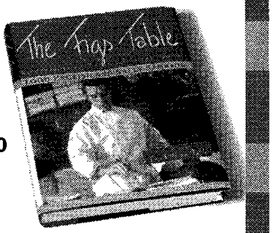


THE FIGS TABLE

by Todd English and Sally Sampson

The authors of the acclaimed *The Olives Table* return with more than 100 Mediterranean-inspired, home-tested recipes from the award-winning Boston restaurant Figs. It features Todd English's trademark style—big, bold flavors sure to make any meal special. (Simon & Schuster)

Pub. Price: $25.00
Discount **30%**
B&N Price: $17.50

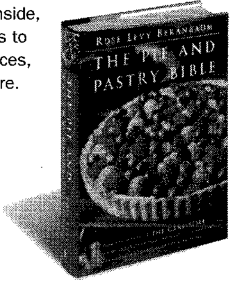


THE PIE AND PASTRY BIBLE

by Rose Levy Beranbaum

The International Association of Culinary Professionals gave Rose Levy Beranbaum the Cookbook of the Year Award for *The Cake Bible.* Now, she works her baking magic on pies, tarts and pastries. Inside, you'll find the secrets to fabulous fillings, sauces, glazes and much more. (Scribner)

Pub. Price: $35.00
Discount **30%**
B&N Price: $24.50



ON COOKING, 2ND EDITION

by Sarah R. Labensky and Alan M. Hause

On Cooking features tips, techniques and recipes from fifty of today's hottest restaurants and chefs. More than 750 gourmet choices reflect a wide range of cooking styles—from Classic French to New American—while new chapters on hors d'oeuvres and sandwiches help you host the perfect gathering. (Prentice Hall)

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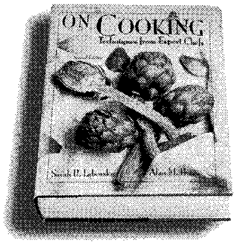

HOW TO COOK EVERYTHING

by Mark Bittman

With an emphasis on fresh, widely available ingredients, basic equipment and healthful techniques, here's the one-stop culinary reference for today's cooks. Bittman demonstrates how to take a relaxed approach to cooking so you can enjoy yourself in the kitchen and still achieve outstanding results. (Macmillan)

Pub. Price: $25.00
Discount **30%**
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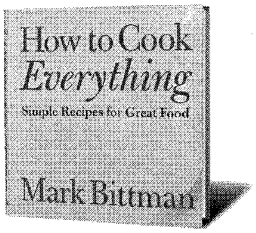
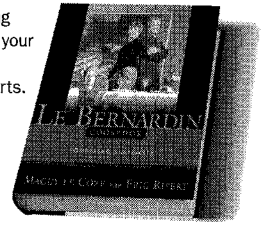


LE BERNARDIN COOKBOOK

by Maguy le Coze and Eric Ripert

From Poached Halibut on Marinated Vegetables to Grilled Salmon with Mushrooms, more than one hundred recipes from the chefs at Le Bernardin bring elegant seafood dining to your table. And don't miss the restaurant's famed desserts. (Doubleday)

Publisher's Price: $30.00
Discount **30%**
B&N Price: $21.00



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PHOTOGRAPHY

Virginia Beahan & Laura McPhee—"No Ordinary Land," a selection of a dozen medium- and large-scale color landscapes of places ranging from California to Iceland to Sri Lanka. Through Dec. 23. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

Larry Gianettino—Large, vivid, and often disturbing Cibachromes of small children's toys; "Bunny with a Head Wound" is a typical title. Through Jan. 16. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

"Aero"—Images of aviation from the twenties through the fifties. Through Dec. 30. (De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

"Camera Work"—Photogravures from Stieglitz's legendary turn-of-the-century journal by, among others, Steichen, Käsebier, Coburn, and Strand. Through Jan. 7. (Platinum, 551 W. 22nd St. 352-0070.)

"The Edge of Night"—Landscape photography from New York, Los Angeles, and Tokyo, by Richard Rothman, Catherine Opie, and Tokihiro Sato. Through Dec. 12. (Leubsdorf gallery, Hunter College, 68th St. and Lexington Ave. 772-4991. Open Mondays through Saturdays, 1 to 6.)

International Center of Photography—"Walker Evans, Simple Secrets," a show of works from the collection of Marian and Benjamin A. Hill. . . . ¶ "Intimate City: The Photographs of Thomas Roma." Both shows through Nov. 29. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"Man Ray: Photography and Its Double," a large show of works from the artist's archives, which are housed at the Pompidou Center, in Paris. Through Jan. 24. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Short List—**ANSEL ADAMS,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through Dec. 5. . . . **JEFF BURTON,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Through Dec. 19. . . . **LYNN DAVIS,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through Jan. 16. . . . **PHILIP-LORCA DI CORCIA,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through Jan. 16. . . . **JIM DINE,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through Nov. 28. . . . **LYNN GEESAMAN,** Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through Jan. 9. . . . **NAN GOLDIN,** Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Through Nov. 28. . . . **JAN GROOVER** and **LEE FRIEDLANDER,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Both shows through Dec. 31. . . . **KIM IACONO,** Arsenal gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. 360-8163. Open weekdays, 9 to 5; through Dec. 10. . . . **BILL JACOBSON,** Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through Nov. 28. . . . **ARTHUR LEIPZIG,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through Dec. 5. . . . **MICK LINDBERG,** Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through Dec. 5. . . . **ABELARDO MORELL,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Dec. 5. . . . **JOHN SCHABEL,** Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752. Through Dec. 5. . . . **AARON SISKIND** and **MARIO GIACOMELLI,** Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays; both shows through Dec. 5. . . . **GEORGE A. TICE** and **DOLORÈS MARAT,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Both shows through Dec. 23.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.)

LISTENING BOOTH: 'TIS THE SEASON

The Tallis Scholars, celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary on an American tour that stops in New York next week, provide the top choice in this year's Seasonal CD Sweepstakes: Peter Phillips brings his singers into perfect balance on **THE TALLIS CHRISTMAS MASS** (Gimell 289-454-934-2), featuring Thomas Tallis's seven-part "Puer Natus" Mass, one of the most elaborate works to issue from Renaissance England. But other highly recommendable seasonal releases have recently hit the shelves, too. On **LOST MUSIC OF EARLY AMERICA** (Telarc 80482), Martin Pearlman directs the choir and period-instrument players of Boston Baroque in Moravian "lovefeasts"—musical services of hymns and short art compositions—for Christmas, Lent, and Thanksgiving in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania and North Carolina. The Christmas Lovefeast comprises ten elegant works by six composers, many never before recorded, each paying obeisance to the stylistic model of Haydn.

Ethnic Christmas music of a completely different sort is provided by the Russian Patriarchate Choir on **RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS** (Opus 111 OPS 30-218), a captivating rendering of chant and weirdly dissonant, organumlike polyphony from the Orthodox Liturgy for the Nativity. The group's twelve male singers produce bracing tones that are captured in exceptionally vivid sound. The Retrover Ensemble sounds reassuringly familiar in comparison; comprising an American, a Canadian, a Brazilian, an Argentine, an Israeli, a Dutchman, and two Finns, the octet (established in 1986) boasts fluency in the current lingua franca of the international early-music scene. Christmas music dominates the group's new disk, **PIAE CANTIONES: LATIN SONG IN MEDIAEVAL FINLAND** (Naxos 8.554180), a collection of devotional songs published in 1582 but reflecting a variety of musical styles associated with earlier eras.

The sober spirituality of the German Baroque infuses **HEINRICH SCHÜTZ: GEISTLICHE CHOR-MUSIC 1648** (CPO 999-546-2; two disks), performed by the Weser-Renaissance Bremen, with Manfred Cordes directing; the burnished choral singing is magnificent, the brass playing downright luscious. Though **BACH'S "CHRISTMAS ORATORIO"** is well represented in the catalogue, the latest entry, with Masaaki Suzuki leading the impressive Bach Collegium Japan (BIS 941/942; two disks), repays a careful listen. Working in generously scheduled sessions, the musicians and engineers achieve a refinement that is rare in the industry; some of their decisions about balance are unorthodox, yet it's fascinating to hear the extraordinary countertenor Yoshikazu Mera presented no more prominently in the acoustic than any other participant—essentially as a member of the ensemble whose part happens to have words.

THE PROMISE OF AGES (Sony Classical SK 60713), with Andrew Parrot's Taverner Consort and Choir, is an entertaining catchall of little-known post-Handelian carol settings, songs medieval and modern, and folk-inspired numbers. On the same label, two rereleases also deliver the goods. Ignore the frighteningly merry photo of the soloist on **NELSON EDDY: SONGS FOR CHRISTMAS** (as well as his predictably nasal performances) and go directly to the two "bonus tracks" (which occupy more than half the disk's playing time): Morton Gould's imaginative "Serenade of Carols" and "Suite of Christmas Hymns," with the composer leading his own orchestra in both (SFK 60800). For a forthright recital of seasonal favorites, don't overlook **CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE: EILEEN FARRELL** (SFK 60802). There's nothing gimmicky in her singing or in Luther Henderson's orchestrations: just one of America's most beautiful voices, her substantial soprano captured (in 1959) in its prime, her Irish-accented "R"s making you feel like you're eavesdropping on a warmhearted family gathering.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**LA BOHÈME,** with Francesca Pedaci, Gwynne Geyer, Vladimir Grishko, and Roberto de Candia; conducted by Julius Rudel. (Nov. 25 at 8.) . . . With Frank Lopardo instead of Mr. Grishko. (Nov. 28 at 1:30.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Patricia Racette, Marcelo Alvarez, and Vladimir Chernov; James Levine. (Nov. 27 at 8 and Nov. 30 at 7:30.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Felicity Lott, Barbara Bonney, Kristine Jepson, Bryn Terfel, and Dwayne Croft; Mr. Levine. (Nov. 28 at 8.) . . . With Susanne Mentzer instead of Ms. Jepson. (Dec. 1 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, André Previn conducting. Nov. 25 and Nov. 27-28 at 8 and Dec. 1 at 7:30: Druckman's "Aureole," Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 (with Pamela Frank), and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7. . . . ¶ Nov. 28 at 2: Dvořák's Symphony No. 7, plus Kodály's Serenade for Two Violins and Viola (played by members of the orchestra). (875-5030.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Paavo Järvi conducts the Fourth Symphonies of Mendelssohn and Mahler, with soprano Juliane Banse featured in the latter. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 1 at 8.)

RECITALS

Christina Sunnerstam—The violinist, born in Sweden but now living in New York City, offers a smorgasbord of Scandinavian works, by Grieg, Stenhammar, Alfvén, Nielsen, Sibelius, Erland von Kock, and Tor Aulin; with pianist Steven Mayer. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 25 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Cabaret singer Mary Cleere Haran is joined by pianist Richard Rodney Bennett and double-bassist Linc Milliman for an all-Gershwin program. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Nov. 26 at 7:30 and Nov. 29 at 4.)

SALLY GROVER

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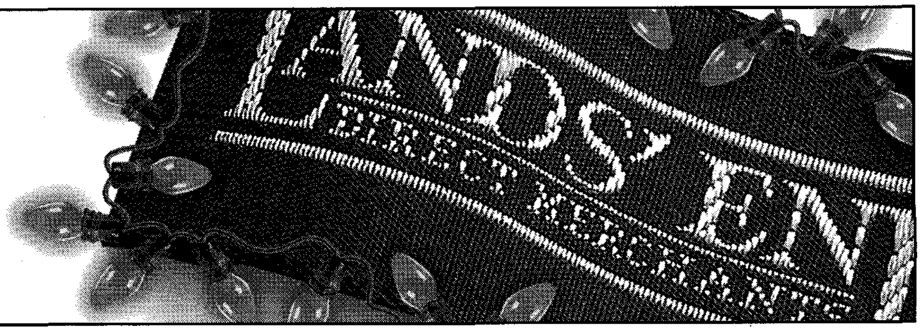


Alicia de Larrocha—The pianist performs Turina's "Tres Danzas Fantásticas," Albéniz's "La Vega" and "Navarra," and several works by Chopin. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Nov. 28 at 8.)

Yosuke Kawasaki—Nov. 29 at noon: The violinist, assisted by pianist Vadim Serebriyani, plays a recital that includes sonatas by Mozart (in C Major, K. 216) and Schumann (in A Minor). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478.) . . . ¶ With pianist Ilan Rechtman instead of Mr. Serebriyani. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 29 at 6 and 8.) . . . ¶ Nov. 30 at 8: Messrs. Kawasaki and Rechtman offer works by Schubert and Prokofiev (his Violin Sonata No. 1), in what is to be the last free Monday-night concert at the Mansfield Hotel. The series was close to the heart of hotelier Bernard Goldberg, who instituted recitals as an amenity for hotel patrons and a boon for anyone else who might care to attend. He sold his hotels last July, and the Mansfield's new owners do not share his enthusiasm for grassroots cultural enrichment. (He also divested himself of the Hotel Wales as part of the package, but the concert series he established there continues, at least for the nonce.) It was a generous two-and-a-half-year run of a hundred and thirty recitals; music lovers owe Mr. Goldberg a show of gratitude for putting many aspiring musicians on the Mansfield's diminutive stage, and for providing such fine entertainment gratis. (12 W. 44th St. No tickets necessary.)

The Queen's Chamber Band—The modern-instrument early-music group offers Rameau's five "Pièces de Clavecin en Concert." (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Nov. 29 at 2. For information about tickets, call 932-9462.)

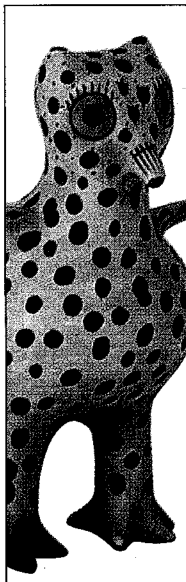
Toby Hoffman—The violist opens the seventh season of concerts sponsored by the New York Viola Society, playing sonatas by Mendelssohn (in C Minor) and Vieuxtemps (in B-Flat Major), as well as Schumann's "Märchenbilder." Pianist Paige Hoffman assists. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Nov. 30 at 8. For information about tickets, call 924-7299.)

Washington Square Contemporary Music Society—The ensemble offers works by Stravinsky, Chen Yi, and Donald Martino, among others. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Dec. 1 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"W.O.T.T."—The initials stand for Walk Off the Turkey, and for the past fourteen years that's what a group of peripatetic New Yorkers have been doing on the weekend following our nation's most gluttonous holiday. Led by Cy A Adler, the founder of a nonprofit environmental group called Shorewalkers, this year's saunter is along the Hudson River, starting from the Staten Island Ferry Building, at the tip of Manhattan, and ending eleven miles later at the Little Red Lighthouse, beneath the George Washington Bridge. The walk is held rain or shine. "It's not like going into the woods, where you're stuck if you go," Adler says. "Here if you get to Forty-second Street and you don't like the weather, you can hail a cab." (Nov. 28, starting at 9:30 A.M. For more information, call 330-7686.)

Readings—Nov. 30 at 7:30: By poets Bob Hershon and Bill Zavatsky. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 30 at 7:30: From this year's edition of "The Best American Short Stories," by series editor Katrina Kenison, 1998 editor Garrison Keillor, and contributors Bliss Broyard and Meg Wolitzer. (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Nov. 30 at 8: By Tonya Foster and Jonathan Skinner, from their poetry. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.)



HAVE WE MET?

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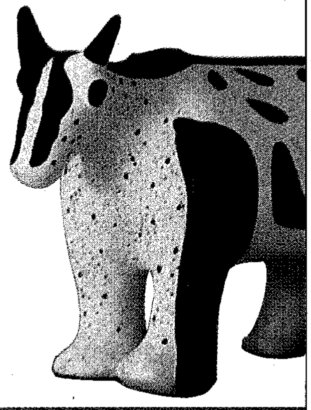

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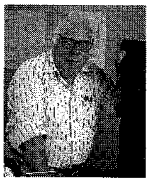

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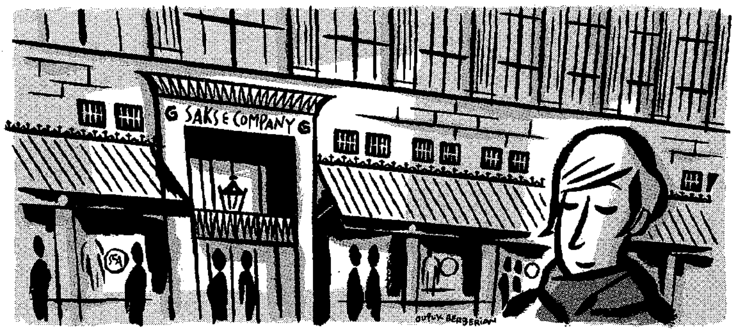
ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

611 Fifth

Nearly sixty years ago, a midsummer note in these pages read: "Lady went into Saks to purchase some beach chairs last Thursday and remarked to a sales clerk that she was surprised the place wasn't air-conditioned, since after all many of the other department stores around town were. 'We don't feel we need it, Ma'am,' replied the clerk. 'Most of our customers go away for the summer.' " These days, Saks has air-conditioning and a few other features that might horrify its founders, Horace Saks and Bernard Gimbel: it has adopted the nickname S5A, and it has become a chain, with fifty-seven outposts around the country. Nevertheless, Saks—at least the 615,000-square-foot dowager on Fifth Avenue—is still *Saks*, the last great classic department store in Manhattan.



One of the place's secrets is a reassuring lack of surprises. The elevators remain creakily oak-panelled, with their domed ceilings and huge mirrors intact. The floor staff still resists the obsequious mugger approach, but is attentive when needed. Except, that is, on the first floor. As in every department store, this is cosmetics world, peopled by aggressive platoons of scent spritzers, firing at will with the new By Dolce & Gabbana (dressed in a zebra print for men, leopard for women; $60 and $70) and hawking the cultish, "miraculous" Crème de la Mer ($155) and a new blue cream with copper in it called Osmotics ($95)—all exclusive to Saks. "It helps your skin scar better," malaprops the counterman about the blue cream. Open a Saks account and you get ten per cent off most everything the first day—most everything, that is, except cosmetics.

As you rise, so does the tone. It's on the second floor—the neighborhood of European ateliers, cashmere, and Donna Karan, through which winds a yellow brick road—that the greatest changes have been wrought; well, here and on five. Two is architect-designed, with sinuous wooden arches overhead and couches and flattering lights in the shoplets along the perimeter. It's Isaac Mizrahi's last stand, and the only place to find the lush brocade frock coats and vests of Favourbrook. The third floor is also about luxe and couture—Valentino, Lacroix, Miyake. Floors four and seven are somewhat staid and sensible: career clothes and the ladies' lounge, where exhausted ladies do indeed lounge, are on four; fur-collared coats, petites, and special five-minute gift wrapping ($5.41 per package) are on seven. Five is the bright, all-action floor that replicates SoHo (Tocca, Anna Sui, Vivienne Tam, etc.) and adds a touch of Notting Hill (Christa Davis's saturated-color silks). The attention of a "One-on-One" personal shopper is available here, and Motown and Tricky are on the sound system—except in the cashmere area, where sweaters from Fake London (with a silhouette of Queen Elizabeth bedecked with a string of fake pearls; $492) compete with the Teletubbies on video screens.

Men can lounge on the sixth floor—the only one devoted to them—which remains the destination for a good suit. There are also Christmas ornaments here; you can accessorize the tree with a glittery Brooklyn Bridge ($32) or a golden Checker cab ($35). In the tchotchke vein, musical snow globes can be found on this floor, and everywhere else. They're the Saks prewrapped holiday gift of '98, the store's nod to tackiness, wherein the Empire State Building and other Gotham landmarks (including Saks itself) are peppered with glitter to the tune of "New York, New York." Finally, on the eighth floor, you'll find bags and tins of candy, which serve to entice kids away from their adjacent clothes department, as well as the gorgeous gewgaws of the Frank McIntosh Home Store—glass dishes in candy-cane colors or millefiori ($15-$28), pashmina-and-silk throws-cum-shawls ($295). There's also the Café SFA, where you can settle into a comfy booth, order a turkey club and an iced tea, and imagine what you might discover on the descent.

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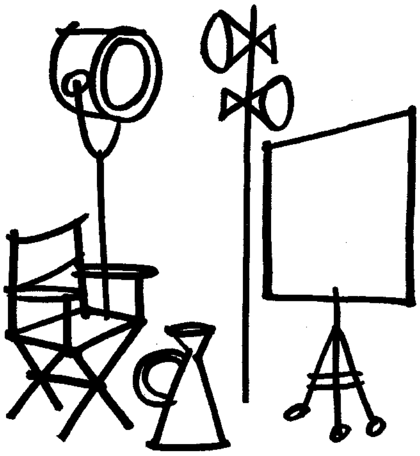
THE MOVIES



OPENING

Babe: Pig in the City—The further adventures of the talking pig, directed by George Miller. With James Cromwell. Opening Nov. 25.

A Bug's Life—A computer-animated film about an ant colony threatened by a group of grasshoppers. Directed by John Lasseter and Andrew Stanton. Opening Nov. 25. (Cinema I, Guild, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Home Fries—A romantic comedy, written by Vince Gilligan, about a dead man, his widow, her sons, and his pregnant ex-girlfriend. With Drew Barrymore, Catherine O'Hara, Luke Wilson, and Jack Busey; directed by Dean Parisot. Opening Nov. 25. (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

Ringmaster—A comedy about a fictional confrontational-style talk show. With Jerry Springer; directed by Neil Abramson. Opening Nov. 25.

Savior—Dennis Quaid plays a hardened soldier who finds his humanity while caring for an orphaned child. Directed by Peter Antonijevic. Opening Nov. 27. (Village East Cinemas.)

Steam: The Turkish Bath—Ferzan Opetek's tale of a young Italian (Alessandro Gassman) who inherits a bathhouse in Turkey. In Italian and Turkish. Opening Nov. 25. (Quad Cinema.)

Very Bad Things—Writer-director Peter Berg's black comedy about a bachelor party in Las Vegas which goes very wrong. With Christian Slater, Jeremy Piven, and Jon Favreau. Opening Nov. 25. (Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

À Nous la Liberté (1931)—René Clair's imaginative social satire on the mechanization of modern life begins with a man (Raymond Cordy) who escapes from prison and builds a phonograph-record business with an assembly line that's as regimented as the prison. This factory owner is modelled on Charles Pathé, who said of his phonograph-cinema empire, "Only the armaments industry made profits like ours." The tycoon's pal from his prison days is a softhearted "little man" (Henri Marchand)—the underdog embodiment of a free, humanistic spirit. Beautifully made, the picture has elegantly futuristic sets by Lazare Meerson, and Georges Périnal's cinematography has a simplified, formal perfection; the whole film is paced to Georges Auric's memorable score—one of the earliest (yet best) film scores ever written. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 29.)

Celebrity—Woody Allen assembles yet another all-star cast; this time, stardom itself is the object of his attention. Kenneth Branagh, trying out a Woody Allen impersonation that makes you want to hide under your seat and cram popcorn in your ears, plays a journalist with an itch. He hops from a rotten marriage with Robin (Judy Davis) to an actress (Melanie Griffith), and from there to a supermodel (Charlize Theron) with erogenous zones all over her body; he then takes up with a book editor of rare beauty (Famke Janssen), whom for some unfathomable reason he discards in favor of another actress (Winona Ryder). The hero's restlessness infects the rest of the movie; the story feels febrile and unhappy, and Allen seems to take his dissatisfaction out on his helpless characters—especially the women. The only moment of joy comes when Robin, corralling the guests for a TV show, sends a rabbi into the same room as a bunch of Klansmen ("Have the skinheads eaten all the bagels already?"). With Michael Lerner, Bebe Neuwirth, Joe Mantegna as a nice guy, and Leonardo DiCaprio as a spoiled brat. Filmed in black-and-white by Sven Nykvist.—*Anthony Lane* (11/23/98) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Central Station—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

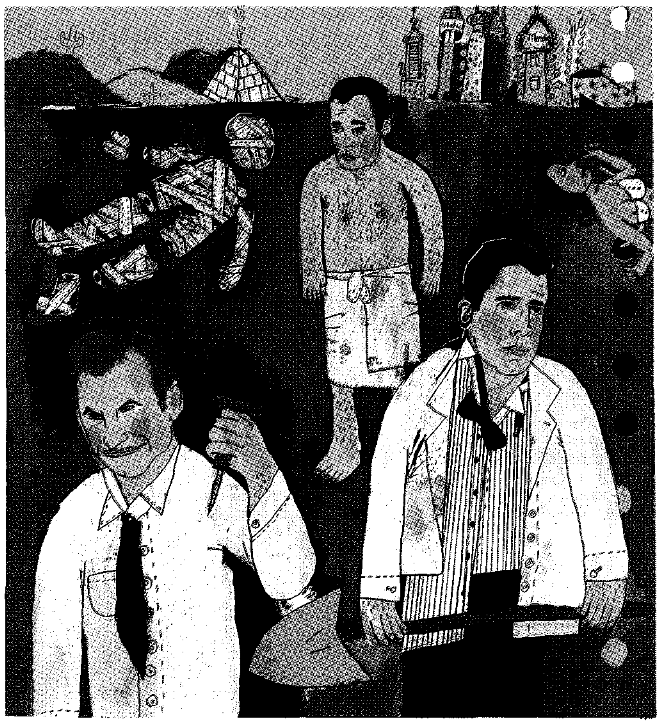
Elizabeth—This grisly, flamboyant account of the Virgin Queen's early days as a monarch has been made with the extravagant panache of a fashion magazine launching an experimental issue. The color scheme is predominantly black on black, the tone one of chic brutality. Yet no one will be bored. Screenwriter Michael Hirst alters and conflates events that took place over many years—by degrees, Elizabeth (Cate Blanchett), a Protestant surrounded by powerful Catholics, takes control of England by pulling off a kind of internal coup d'état. The means of her ascension is Sir Francis Walsingham (Geoffrey Rush), a perfect Machiavellian character who serves the Queen as adviser, deadly assassin, and spy. Elizabeth's climb to power, however, is a personal disaster: the supple-waisted maiden with long red hair becomes stiff and harsh, emerging from her youth white-faced and trapped in the armor of a thick brocade dress. The movie is a horror film masquerading as a historical pageant. With Richard Attenborough, Kathy Burke, and Joseph Fiennes as Robert Dudley, Elizabeth's slender, ardent, and possibly treacherous lover. Directed by Shekhar Kapur.—*David Denby* (11/16/98) (Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

Enemy of the State—In this breathlessly paranoid Tony Scott thriller, a young Washington labor lawyer (Will Smith) unwittingly receives some incriminating evidence of wrongdoing by an official (Jon Voight) high up in the National Security Agency. The official wants it back. Despite much blather about the right to privacy, the movie is essentially an endless chase, in which Smith is pursued and spied on by cars, vans, cameras (still and video), microphones, tape recorders, satellites, helicopters, computers (desktop), voice analyzers, humans, and two spotted owls. The movie goes like the wind, but it's more a technological exercise than anything else. Lickety-split editing by Chris Lebenzon; produced, furiously, by Jerry Bruckheimer.—*D.D.* (84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Embassy 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Union Square.)

Gods and Monsters—In the nineteen-fifties, the British-born director James Whale, who had lent depth and dignity to the horror film with "Frankenstein" and "Bride of Frankenstein," idled away his time, all but forgotten by the movie industry, in Pacific Palisades, California; eventually, he drowned in his pool. Bill Condon's elegant and tactful picture, founded on Christopher Bram's novel "Father of Frankenstein," speculates on what might have happened in those final days. The inquiry draws fine performances from Ian McKellen as the dandyish Whale and from Brendan Fraser as his (wholly fictitious) gardener, Clayton Boone, with whom the older man becomes obsessed. With Lynn Redgrave as a Puritan housekeeper.—*A.L.* (11/9/98) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.)

Happiness—The Jordans (Ben Gazzara and Louise Lasser) are ending their frayed marriage, while their daughters (Jane Adams, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Cynthia Stevenson) look wearily for love, and their respectable son-in-law (Dylan Baker) dreams of slaughter and plans his molestation of underage boys. Just an ordinary day in New Jersey, as far as filmmaker Todd Solondz is concerned, but his obsession with sexual aberration somehow flattens his roster of characters into uniformity; when the large, kindly Kristina (Camryn Manheim) turns out to have dismembered her doorman and frozen his body parts, you can hardly be bothered to take offense.—*A.L.* (10/19/98) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)

The Last Waltz (1978)—Arguably, the best of all rock-concert documentaries. Martin Scorsese's film of The Band's Thanksgiving, 1976, performance in San Francisco is even-tempered and intensely satisfying. Scorsese, who shot it while he was still working on "New York, New York," seems in complete control of his talent and of the material. Visually, it's dark-toned and rich and classically simple. The sound is so clear that the instruments have the distinctness that one hears on the most craftsmanlike recordings. And the casual interviews have a musi-



Opening Nov. 25, Christian Slater, Jeremy Piven, and Jon Favreau in "Very Bad Things."

MARK TODD

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SERB DOUBTS

Living in cross hairs of NATO

by Justin Brown
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

WHEN an earthquake hit northern Serbia last week, the people of Belgrade thought it was the Big One – not a natural disaster, but the bomb attack NATO had been threatening

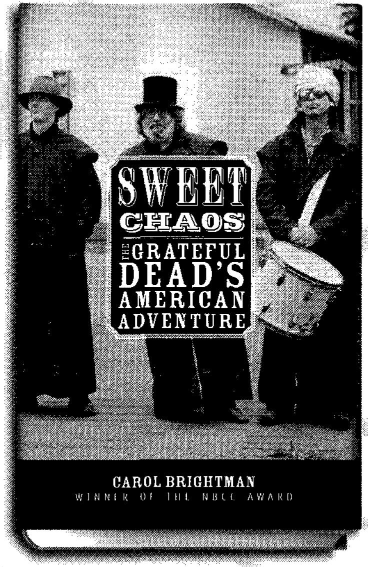
Idaho Battles Image as Haven for Hate

A white-supremacist group marched here July 18. State has most hate groups per capita.

by Brad Knickerbocker
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO– When someone says "Idaho," do you think: "First state with a Jewish governor; first state where a native American won statewide office; fourth state to allow women the right to vote; first state

Navigating the culture by Dead reckoning



Carol Brightman, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, brilliantly explores the musical and social influence of The Grateful Dead.

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cal, rhythmic ease; Scorsese's conversations with the men give us a sense of the pressures that strain their feelings of community.—*P.K.* (Symphony Space; Dec. 1.)

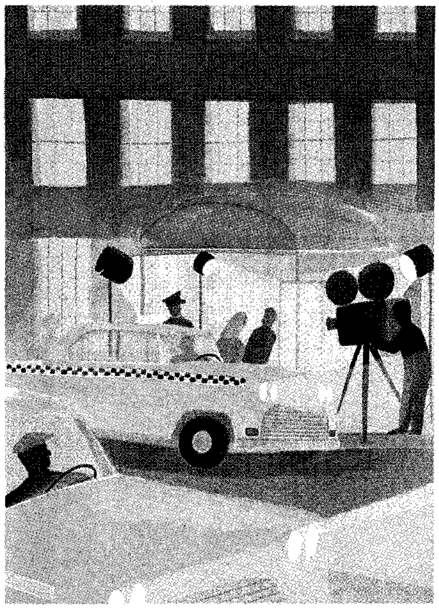
Life Is Beautiful—Would that it were. The great, donkey-faced Italian clown Roberto Benigni attempts an ambitious fable of comedy's redemptive power. He plays an Italian Jew who keeps alive his little boy's innocence in a Nazi concentration camp by pretending that the routines of the camp are no more than an intricate game staged for his son's benefit. After all, Benigni appears to be saying, the Germans were indulging a fantasy, too—the fantasy of total control. But Benigni's ironic counter-reality undermines this movie, not the Nazis, who were beyond ridicule for the same reason that they were beyond rationality. Totalitarianism makes the fantastic literal—that is its demonic appeal. Benigni's jokes and games just aren't enough, and you leave the movie thinking that what's touching is not Benigni's ministrations to the little boy but his own need to believe in comedy as salvation. With Nicoletta Braschi as the hero's wife, and Giorgio Cantarini, who has the heartbreaking quality of the children in the old neorealist movies, as the boy. In Italian.—*D.D.* (11/16/98) (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

Living Out Loud—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Meet Joe Black—Martin Brest's new weepie is a loose rehash of Mitchell Leisen's 1934 "Death Takes a Holiday." Leisen brought his work in at less than ninety minutes; Brest has time to kill, and after three hours of emotional splurge he can hardly bear to tear himself away. Anthony Hopkins plays a media tycoon with a heart, which is in itself a difficult concept to grapple with; Claire Forlani plays his daughter, who is engaged to a dork in a good suit. She hopes for something better, and along it comes in the shape of Brad Pitt. He has the misfortune to die shortly afterward, but you can't have everything. Death then assumes Brad's body, and, taking the name Joe Black, arrives to claim the tycoon's soul and woo his daughter all over again. There are many unanswered questions here (why, for instance, does Pitt's Grim Reaper seem semi-retarded?), not to mention unintended spasms of comedy; in the end, however, they all get swallowed up in the mush.—*A.L.* (11/23/98) (Beekman, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

The Outlaw and His Wife (1918)—Victor Sjöström showed his directorial gift for wringing poetic force from the elements of nature in this sex-and-action-packed melodrama, set in rural Iceland in the mid-eighteenth century. He also stars as a virtuous sheep thief (he robbed to feed his family) who escapes from prison, strikes amorous sparks with a proper farm widow, and, when a jealous rival uncovers his identity, runs off with her into the highlands. Although this is hardly a deep or probing work, it *is* a majestic one: it's no small feat for Sjöström to sustain emotions that match his mountains, blizzards, and hot springs. Sjöström's real-life spouse, Edith Erastoff, plays the outlaw's common-law wife.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Nov. 27-28.)

The Siege—New York is terrorized by Islamic militants. Bombs go off everywhere; casualties climb into the hundreds; no one can go *shopping*. A hard-driving F.B.I. agent (Denzel Washington) kills some of the bad guys, but not all of them, so a sardonic, neofascist Army general (Bruce Willis) declares martial law and seals off Brooklyn with tanks and troops. Director Edward Zwick turns on the sorrowful spectacle: The Army rounds up every young Arab-American male in the borough and herds them all into an open-air stadium. The F.B.I. agent then lectures the general on civil liberty. Torture is bad, he says. Shredding the Constitution is bad. "The Siege" offers an improbable set of circumstances and then gets all hot under the collar as it rejects the preposterous situation that it has set up for itself. The filmmakers peddle fear and then try to claim the moral high ground; the treatment is foolish, confused, and borderline irresponsible. With Annette Bening as a shady C.I.A. agent who has ambiguous relations with terrorists, and Tony Shalhoub as an Arab-American federal agent. Screenplay by Lawrence Wright (a *New Yorker* contributor) and Menno Meyjes.—*D.D.* (11/16/98) (Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)



GEOFFREY PARKER

Storefront Hitchcock—Jonathan Demme's almost ascetically simple concert film shows Englishman Robyn Hitchcock performing alone, in a storefront on Fourteenth Street. Under Demme's pared-down scrutiny, the aging cult rocker emerges as a far better poet than a crafter of tunes; he sings like a teen idol from the British Invasion era, but his witty gloom is closer to Hieronymus Bosch. At his best he's a brave, solemn comedian, musing between songs about cancer and the fact that Julius Caesar was a very short man.—*Sarah Kerr* (Film Forum.)

Velvet Goldmine—Quite an achievement: the American director Todd Haynes revisits the world of London glam rock and manages to make it look dull. He and his costume designer certainly lay on the peacock flamboyance of the nineteen-seventies, but none of the strange creatures concerned appear to be having any fun. Jonathan Rhys Meyers, of whom great things have been predicted, gives a curiously thin and flat-voiced performance as Brian Slade, a David Bowie figure of suitably indeterminate sexual preference. Ewan McGregor has more of a laugh as Curt Wild, a version of Iggy Pop, but the picture refuses to follow his example.—*A.L.* (11/9/98) (Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

The Wizard of Oz (1939)—What's astonishing about the digitally remastered print with new stereo sound is not its look—which is gorgeous—but its talent, which is, and always was, awesome. The Yip Harburg–Harold Arlen score is magnificent; the combined vaudeville experience of Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, and Bert Lahr can't be topped by contemporary entertainers; and Judy Garland is, well, Judy Garland. On the big screen, the story line also seems crisp and subtle. There's a sense of wonder and joy in every frame of this film, which is why it's evergreen.—*John Lahr* (Astor Plaza, Coronet Cinema, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

AMERICAN HISTORY X: Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.... **ANTZ** (reviewed in our issue of 10/19/98): Embassy 3, Lincoln Square, and 64th and 2nd.... **CITIZEN KANE:** Union Square.... **DANCING AT LUGHNASA:** BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.... **I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS:** Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.... **I STILL KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER:** Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.... **JOHN CARPENTER'S VAMPIRES:** Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.... **PLEASANTVILLE:** Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 19th Street East 6, State, and Village Theatre VII.... **THE RUGRATS MOVIE:** East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, State, and Village Theatre VII.... **SUE:** Quad Cinema.... **TEN BENNY:** Angelika Film Center.... **WAKING NED DEVINE:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.... **THE WATERBOY:** 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.... **WELCOME TO WOOP WOOP:** Union Square.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** A program of films directed by Edgar G. Ulmer. Nov. 25: "Cossacks in Exile" (1939) and "From Nine to Nine" (1936)....Nov. 26: "Hannibal" (1960) and "The Cavern" (1965).... Nov. 27: "Beyond the Time Barrier" (1960), "The Amazing Transparent Man" (1960), and "Daughter of Dr. Jekyll" (1957).... Nov. 28: "Murder Is My Beat" (1955), "Club Havana" (1945), and "L'Atlantide" (1961)....Nov. 29-30: "The Singing Blacksmith" (1938; in Yiddish) and "The Light Ahead" (1939; in Yiddish)....Dec. 1: "The Singing Blackmith" and "American Matchmaker" (1940; in Yiddish).... **THEATRE 3:** "Touch of Evil" (1958, Orson Welles).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films from Brazil; all in Portuguese, with English subtitles. Nov. 27 at 2:30: "Night Angels" (1987, Wilson Barros).... Nov. 27 at 6: "Twenty Years Later" (1984, Eduardo Coutinho)....Nov. 27 at 8: "Foreign Land" (1995, Walter Salles, Jr., and Daniela Thomas)....Nov. 28 at 2: "Memories of Prison" (1983, Nelson Pereira dos Santos)....Nov. 28 at 5: "A Margem" (1967, Ozualdo Candeias)....Nov. 29 at 2: "Matrimonial Warfare" (1974, Joaquim Pedro de Andrade)....Nov. 29 at 5: "Earth Entranced" (1967, Glauber Rocha)....Nov. 30 at 2:30: "Bang Bang" (1971, Andrea Tonacci)....Nov. 30 at 6: "Bocage, the Triumph of Love" (1998, Djalma Limongi Batista)....¶ A series of films directed by René Clair. Nov. 27 at 3: "The Two Timid Souls" (1928; a silent film, with French intertitles)....Nov. 27 at 7: "Le Million" (1931; in French, with no English subtitles)....Nov. 27 at 8: "Under the Roofs of Paris" (1930; in French, with no English subtitles)....Nov. 28 at 2:30: "The Italian Straw Hat" (1927; a silent film)....Nov. 28 at 5: "The Imaginary Voyage" (1925; a silent film, with French intertitles)....Nov. 29 at 2:30: "À Nous la Liberté" (†)....Nov. 29 at 5: "Quatorze Juillet" (1932; in French, with no English subtitles)....¶ Nov. 30 at 6:30: "Troika" (1998, Jennifer Montgomery).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Dec. 3: A program of films by Dariush Mehrjui and other Iranian directors; all in Farsi, with English subtitles....¶ Nov. 27-28 at 8: "The Outlaw and His Wife" (†).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Nov. 28 at 2: "Possessed" (1931, Clarence Brown), with Joan Crawford....Nov. 28 at 4: "A Woman's Face" (1941, George Cukor), with Crawford....Nov. 29 at 2: "My Man Godfrey" (1936, Gregory La Cava), with Carole Lombard....Nov. 29 at 4: "Nothing Sacred" (1937, William Wellman), with Lombard.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—A retrospective (through Dec. 22) of films featuring Catherine Deneuve. Dec. 1 at 12:30 and 6:30: "Le Sauvage" (1975, Jean-Paul Rappeneau; in French)....Dec. 1 at 3:30 and 9: "Les Créatures" (1966, Agnès Varda; in French).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Nov. 29 at 7, the feature will be "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" (1944, Arthur Lubin).

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films made by United Artists. Dec. 1 at 7: "New York, New York" (1977, Martin Scorsese)....Dec. 1 at 9:45: "The Last Waltz" (†).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A program of films directed by and/or featuring John Cassavetes. Nov. 27 at 6:30, Nov. 28 at 1:30, and Nov. 29 at 9:30: "Opening Night" (1978)....Nov. 27 at 9:30, Nov. 28 at 7, and Nov. 29 at 4:30: "Faces" (1968).... Nov. 28 at 4:30 and Nov. 29 at 7: "Mikey and Nicky" (1976, Elaine May)....Nov. 28 at 9:30 and Nov. 29 at 1:30: "A Woman Under the Influence" (1975).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.

ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.

BAM ROSE CINEMAS, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-623-2770.

BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.

CHELSEA WEST, 333 W. 23rd St.

CINEMA I, Third Ave. at 60th St.

CINEMA II, Third Ave. at 60th St.

CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.

CORONET CINEMAS, Third Ave. at 59th St.

CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.

EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.

EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.

84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.

EMBASSY 1, 2, AND 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.

FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.

GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.

LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.

LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.

NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.

19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.

OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.

ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.

PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.

REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.

THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.

64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.

72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.

STATE, Broadway at 45th St.

SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.

34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.

UNION SQUARE, Broadway at 13th St.

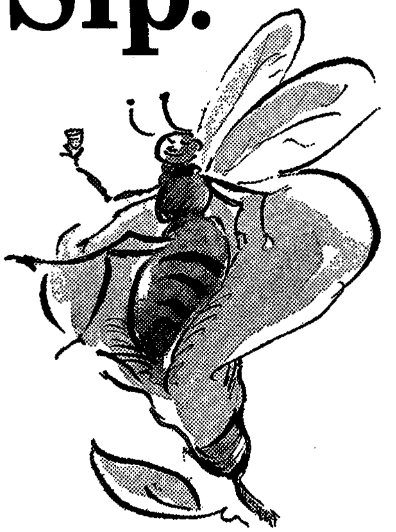
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.

VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.



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COMMENT

Do good fences make good neighbors?

IT used to be that people who owned a lot of things could protect themselves and their things by erecting sturdy houses and, if necessary, putting a lock on the door. Today, it seems, that's not enough. It is estimated that three million American households live within "gated communities"—twenty thousand of them, often equipped with private security guards and electronic surveillance systems. Three years ago, the town of Rosemont, Illinois, erected a beige wrought-iron fence. Rosemont is a suburb of Chicago, with a population of four thousand, and it has one of the largest auxiliary police forces in the United States.

A wall is being erected around the nation, too—an outer perimeter, separating the United States from the Third World. So far, our national wall extends along only sixty-four miles of the nearly two-thousand-mile border with Mexico, but Congress has appropriated funds for lengthening it and also fortifying it.

The urge to erect walls seems to be growing, just as disparities in wealth are widening. Many of the Americans who reside within gates like Rosemont's have become substantially wealthier during the past several years, whereas a great many Americans who live outside the gates have not. (One man, appropriately named Bill Gates, has a net worth roughly equalling the combined net worth of the least wealthy forty per cent of American households.)

On a much larger scale, inhabitants of the planet who reside at latitudes north of the national wall are diverging economically from those who live south of it. The consequence is that at both perimeters—the town wall and the national wall—outsiders are more desperate to get in and insiders are more determined to keep them out. Yet the inconvenient fact is that increasingly, in the modern world, the value of what the insiders own and of the work they do depends on what occurs outside.

Half a world away from Rosemont are places whose currencies, denominated in bahts, ringgits, rupiahs, and won, began toppling more than a year ago, and seem to have come to rest only in the last several weeks at levels far below where they started. This has caused most of these countries' citizens to become far poorer. An Indonesian who had worked for the equivalent of three dollars and thirty-three cents a day before the rupiah's descent is now working for about one dollar and twelve cents. Efforts by the International Monetary Fund to build back the "confidence" of global investors in these nations by conditioning loans on the nation's willingness to raise interest rates and cut their public spending have had the unfortunate side effect of propelling more of their citizens into ever more desperate poverty. After the tremors spread to Russia last summer, and it defaulted on its short-term loans, the worldwide anxiety grew, spreading all the way to Brazil, the largest economy in Latin America, with the widest gap between rich and poor. In return for its promise of austerity, Brazil is now set to receive an international line of credit totalling forty-one and a half billion dollars, designed to convince global investors that its currency will not lose its value, and that, therefore, there is no reason for them to take their money and run.

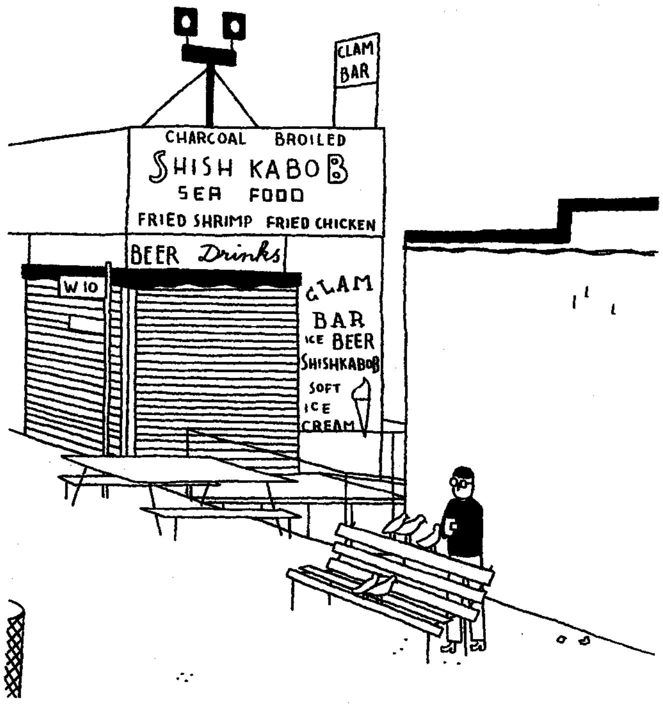


ILLUSTRATION BY LAURENT CILLUFFO

All this commotion has also diminished the economic security of quite a number of people who thought of themselves as safely walled in. The stock market in the United States has revived for now, boosted by an accommodating Federal Reserve Board, which has been cutting short-term interest rates since September 29th, when it began showing as much uneasiness about global deflation as about domestic inflation. But there are serious questions about how long the stock-market revival can last. Recent government data show that in the third quarter of 1998 the profits and investments of American companies shrank for the first time since the recession year of 1991. This is largely because their exports to Asia and Latin America have continued to drop, while cheap imports from those regions are undercutting their sales in the United States. In consequence, they have been laying off American workers at a higher pace, and creating new jobs at a slower pace, than at any time in recent years.

We do not know how many residents of Rosemont will lose their jobs or the value of their stock portfolios because of the continuing global crisis. No burglars will climb over the steel barrier now walling off the United States and then scale Rosemont's beige wrought-iron fence, but some residents of Rosemont will lose a bundle nonetheless.

The major risks of modern life now move through or over walls, sometimes electronically, as with global investments, but occasionally by other means. A lethal influenza virus originating among a few Hong Kong chickens could find its way to Rosemont via a globe-trotting business executive. Drugs are flowing across the border as well, not because the walls are insufficiently thick but because the people behind them are eager to buy. Something there is in capitalism that doesn't love a wall.

So why do we feverishly build more walls when they offer us less and less protection? Perhaps it is because we feel so unprotected of late. Amid all the blather about taking more personal responsibility for this or that, there is a growing fear that random and terrible things can happen to us. Solid walls at least create an illusion of control over what we call our own, and control is something we seem to need more of these days, when almost anyone can be clobbered by a falling baht.

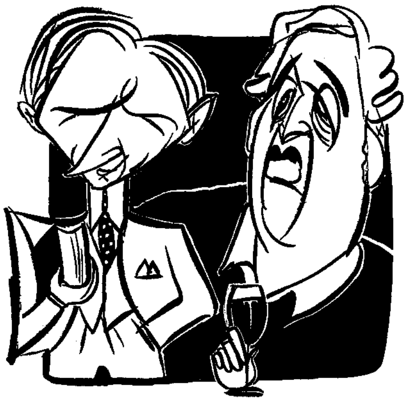
—ROBERT B. REICH

INK

The duelling book parties of Tom Wolfe and Harold Bloom.

LIKE a bride, an author at a book party has a decision to make about how far to throw himself into the revelries. Does he imbibe abstemiously, so as to remain unbloated for the photos and coherent for the receiving line? Or does he let loose, knock back the white wine, scarf down the canapés, and end up leading the guests in a conga line?

Tom Wolfe took the former strategy at the lavish party that was recently held for his Southern masterwork, "A Man in Full," in the Cotillion Room at the Pierre Hotel. Guests lined up at the caviar bar—each plate generously crowded with a blini, a piece of toast, and a roasted new potato, all piled with beluga—or guzzled Cotillion Club Punch (green tea, fruit syrup, rye, and rum). But Wolfe behaved with the fastidiousness one would expect from a man whose customary white three-piece is unforgiving of spills, sticking to a simple Coke and consuming not even a single spot of caviar. He had fuelled up on a chocolate Powerbar before arriving, a tactic that is a bit like taking saltpeter before going on a date with Jennifer Lopez.



Tom Wolfe and Harold Bloom

Wolfe's party sets a new standard to which big-name authors will aspire; now they'll all be wanting fish eggs and ice sculptures (in Wolfe's case, a poster-size relief carving of his publicity photo). By comparison, the party held for Harold Bloom's hefty and lucid new book, "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human," at the Shakespeare Society of America a couple of nights earlier, was a modest affair. There was no caviar, though there were those little cheese-and-nut balls, and there was plenty of wine. Of this the author, a lustier soul than Wolfe, amply partook.

Bloom, whose extensive appetites are matched only by his boundless courtesy, explained himself: "Old Bloom, who had spent the evening being dazzled by a whole series of formidable ladies of the Shakespeare Society, who were very imposing indeed, and grandly dressed, had gotten through all the evening and signed all the books only by drinking quarts and quarts of white wine." But, to hear him tell it, the party really started on the way home: Bloom's major perk from his publishers was a stretch limousine hired to drive him, his wife, and a friend home to New Haven.

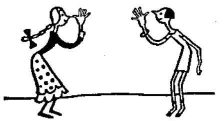
"It was a big black limo, looking rather like a hearsey-verse," said Bloom, whose conversational style owes less to iambic pentameter than to the nursery rhyme. "We felt like schoolchildren. We sat in the stretch limo with our nice little picnic baskets that the lady from the Shakespeare Society had prepared for us, and we ate cheese sandwiches. They were delicious, almost Oscar Wildean—they were very nicely cut and the edges had been taken off. And we had cookies! We had cookies, my dear! We felt like little baby cats."

When asked whether there was anything Shakespearean about his ride, Bloom said, "It was more like Emily Dickinson. Since it was so dark outside and we never stopped, and we were going so fast, I kept thinking about that splendid and sinister poem by Miss Dickinson, 'Because I could not stop for Death.' I was suddenly afraid that we were in that chariot that was going for all eternity. But I wasn't really gloomy. I was just overtired."

—REBECCA MEAD

DEPT. OF SOLIDARITY

What do funny women want? The gender wars invade comedy.



THE recently concluded Marshalls Women in Comedy Festival, held in New York, brought together some fifty female standup comics, all of whom looked unusually pleased, with themselves and with each other, to be doing their stuff. The festivities kicked off with a luncheon, given by one of the producers, John Schreiber, and hosted by Cindy Adams, at the Friars Club, that legendary bastion of Sinatra-Jessel-Berle maleness now tempered with Burnett-Diller-Rivers femaleness. Comics both older and well known (Kate Clinton, Jamie deRoy) and younger and becoming known (Sarah Silverman, René Hicks)

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BACHTELL

mentioned "sisterhood" quite a bit as they joked over baby-lettuce salad.

Silverman: "I don't like doctors. My doctor had to spank me when I was born, but why did he have to call me a whore?"

Chris Covell (short, with short hair) and Amy Crossfield (tall, with long hair), a couple of fairly unknowns in their twenties, an hour off their plane from Chicago, were mesmerized. "I'd say my act is silly," Covell remarked. "I play the guitar and banjo and talk about how people perceive me as gay." Crossfield said, "I started in college, talking about being away from home. Now I take it a little further, talking about life as a single in gritty Chicago." Covell said, "What's great is I don't do hate-myself jokes, that put-down thing, to appease men. Paula Poundstone taught us that."

"Paula is our model," Crossfield said. "Paula does whatever she likes onstage. I hope we get to meet Paula tonight."

At Carnegie Hall that evening, with Mary Tyler Moore as host ("She lends gravitas to the festival," John Schreiber told Cindy Adams), Rita Rudner and Paula Poundstone did their acts. Rudner was on for almost an hour and got a huge laugh every thirty seconds. "It's hard being a woman," she said. "It's like being a female impersonator every day." Poundstone was on for an hour, got a huge laugh every thirty seconds, and did her signature bit, in which she lies down on the floor while talking. "I was driving down a mountain, got lost inadvertently, and drove down the bike trail."

At a reception afterward, Chris Covell and Amy Crossfield got to meet Paula Poundstone. They talked about Zanies, an old Chicago comedy club. Poundstone said that she'd worked there in the eighties. "They used to put us in a place upstairs, so they wouldn't have to pay for a hotel," she said. "It was very scary." Covell and Crossfield looked worshipfully at Poundstone, as though she were somebody from another century, and said that Zanies was still scary, and they laughed together about Zanies for a long time.

The next morning, at a symposium on Funny Women in Television, female talk-show bookers and TV executives told the standups that they had to use their comedic power to further the cause of women. They had to be independent, and their motto, it was agreed, should be "Trust your instincts." Chris Covell found the message heartening. "It was just what we wanted, a pep rally," she said.

—Lillian Ross

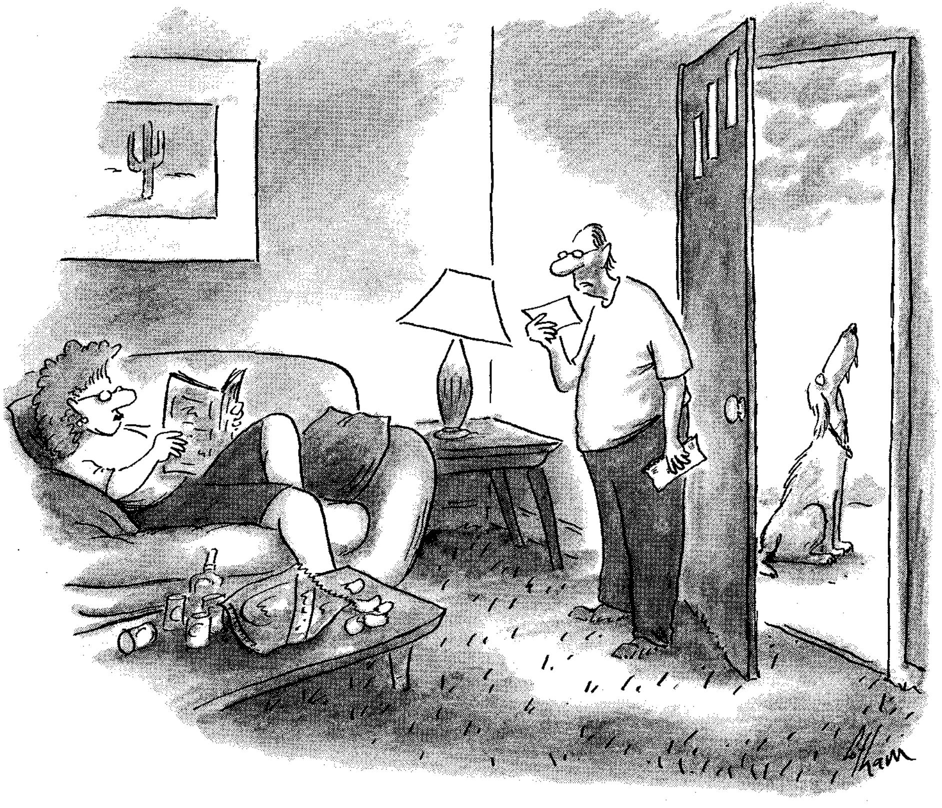
DEPT. OF APPEARANCES

A man's home is his castle, unless it's in a New York historic district.

No one has ever been quite sure what to make of Edward Durell Stone's house, on East Sixty-fourth Street, for the same reason that no one has ever been quite sure what to make of Edward Durell Stone. Stone—the modernist architect who gave the world the Gallery of Modern Art, on Columbus Circle; the General Motors Building; and the Kennedy Center, in Washington—bought a town house in 1956 and promptly covered its façade with a white concrete grille. This grille was made of the same decorative concrete blocks that Stone had used on the façade of his United States Embassy in New Delhi, one of the most well-known buildings of the nineteen-fifties.

Stone's house was an endearing oddity on Sixty-fourth Street for more than thirty years: a slice of something else plopped down in the middle of a block of elegant town houses. It never fit in, but no one seemed to mind, perhaps because of a certain droit du seigneur. Stone, who died in 1978, started his career in the nineteen-thirties, creating some of the most adventurous modernist buildings in the United States, including the original Museum of Modern Art. When he grew disaffected with modernism and began producing his decorative buildings of the fifties and sixties, his reputation took a nosedive. But some critics are now looking at these quirky later buildings as important works of proto-postmodernism; Stone's controversial museum building at Columbus Circle has even aroused the sympathy of landmark preservationists.

Whatever the outcome at Columbus Circle, Stone's own house now has the honor of being the first of his buildings to be saved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Actually, the landmarks commission hasn't precisely saved



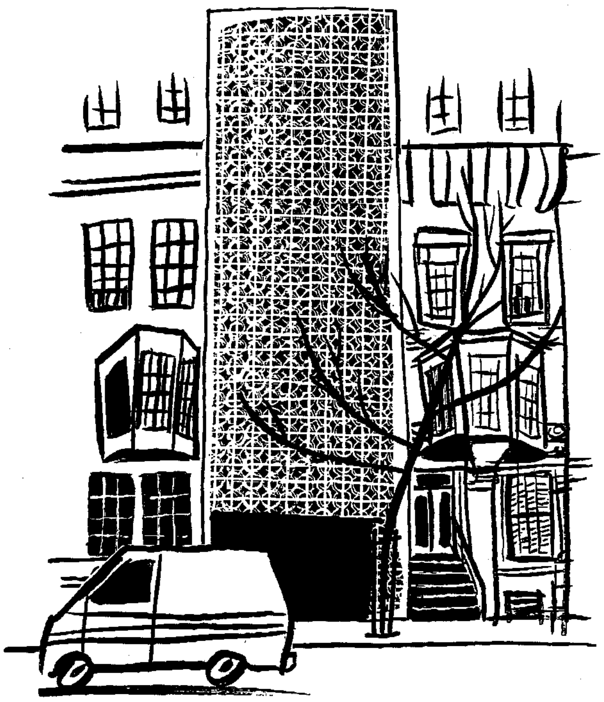
"A collection agency is threatening air strikes."

the house. It has mandated its reconstruction, which began this month, under the supervision of Stone's son, the architect Benjamin Hicks Stone. Ten years ago, he and his mother, Maria Stone, were alarmed to discover that the concrete blocks in the grille were cracking; they had the screen removed, exposing modern windows that the elder Stone had built behind the grille. The landmarks commission considered the removal of the screen an affront to the integrity of the Upper East Side historic district, and slapped a violation on the Stones.

Maria Stone recently decided to put the house up for sale, and since building violations have to be cleared up before the title can change, she and her son decided to put the grille back. Hicks Stone's first thought was to design a new façade. Last summer, he produced a handsome modern design that relates to his father's earliest work. But the landmarks commission suggested that nothing but a reconstruction of the old grille would win its approval.

Hicks Stone, an amiable man who spent four years working for Philip Johnson, views his father with an appealing combination of filial respect and criticism. "I know his weaknesses as an architect, but I also know that he was incredibly bold, coming from Arkansas and becoming the first modernist architect on the East Coast," he recalled the other day, sitting at a white marble table in the town house, whose interior, a curious mixture of rococo and sleek, remains almost exactly as Stone designed it.

Hicks Stone is enjoying the irony of his situation. He says that his father's concrete grille, which bears no resemblance to anything else in the historic district, is just the sort of thing the landmarks commission "would never allow you to actually create today." Still, he is happy that his father's reputation may be climbing back upward. "I will never forget being in an architecture course at Harvard in 1979 and hearing the students begin to hiss when the New Delhi Embassy came on the screen," he said. "It did not make me feel good." —PAUL GOLDBERGER



The Edward Durell Stone house

THE PICTURES

These little piggies stayed home.

EARLIER this month, when Universal Studios announced that it was cancelling its benefit première of "Babe: Pig in the City" because the movie would not be finished in time, there was plenty of embarrassment to go around. Studio executives fretted that their ninety-million-dollar-plus "Babe" sequel might miss its Thanksgiving release date, and Seagram's C.E.O. Edgar Bronfman, Jr., chose the moment to fire Universal's chairman, Frank Biondi, whose wife had organized the charity première. All that was lacking in the debacle was an outraged star throwing a tantrum over her missed moment under the klieg lights.

But the question with "Babe: Pig in the City" is, of course, which star? The hundred white Yorkshire piglets who played Babe are currently spending their days rolling in the mud on the other side of the world, in a most unprima-donna-ish fashion. The film's director, George Miller, has set up his leading ladies in a kind of pig spa on the New South Wales farm that serves as Babe's home in the movies. No one will ever ask them to work a press junket, sign an autograph, or appear on Letterman.

"No animal to table" was Miller's credo in 1995, when he set out to adapt Dick King-Smith's children's book about "a pig with an unprejudiced heart" for the screen. After the first film wrapped, the fifty piglets who played Babe (all females, because male genitals would look unseemly) were given away to people who signed agreements not to slaughter them. When Universal promoted the "Babe" video with a McDonald's campaign, fans were outraged. "How could you do a tie-in with the biggest animal murderer?" one demanded. Chastened, this time Universal turned down a twenty-five-million-dollar tie-in offer from Burger King in favor of a deal with Dole pineapple.

Allie, Aggie, Annie, Abby, Angie, and Amy were the first piglets to be walked onto the "Pig in the City" set last year. Offspring of the King Turk bloodline, they had been handpicked from the piggery at four weeks for their liveliness and charisma. Babe's head trainer, Joanne Kostiuk, worked more than halfway through the alphabet as she named every piglet and presided over a team of seventeen handlers, who bottle-fed, played with, and trained each batch for ten weeks to prepare them for their screen work. "We call her the Pig Whisperer," Miller told me in a recent telephone interview.

Each batch of Babes could work for only three weeks before they became too big for the part. Kostiuk and Miller then auditioned the next six, and Miller selected the one with the most appealing personality to play his lead Babe. "It sounds odd, but there were certain pigs that you just fell in love with," he said. The remaining five were used as stand-ins and stunt pigs. Each morning, all six working pigs were washed and made up, their eyelashes dyed black, and their distinctive, tufty toupees, which Miller designed, glued in place.

Miller said that he views Babe as the classic mythical hero, as defined by Joseph Campbell: "an agent of change who relinquishes self-interest and breaks down the established social or-

IT'S A THOROUGHLY-INTERDEPENDENT-NOTHING-HAPPENS-IN-A-VACUUM-WHEN-IT-RAINS-IN-RUSSIA-IT-AFFECTS-HER-COLLEGE-EDUCATION WORLD AFTER ALL.

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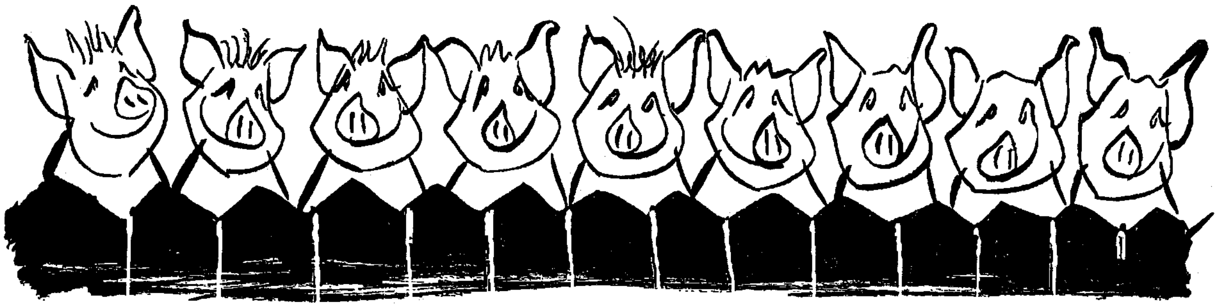
der." He added, "There is a tragic color to the pig. Pigs are reviled, but, somehow, having been bred for meat, they haven't lost their intelligence across all those generations. I'm just blown away by that. So I can't look at a pig now without a sense of reverence. Because they are metaphorical for all of us who are ultimately mortal."

At their swine retirement home, Miller's pigs will live out their normal life span of ten years, a luxury afforded few members of their species. "It is a sanctuary for the pigs," Miller said. "I think they'll just eat, because that's what they're built for. I don't want to destroy anyone's image of Babe, but they are now massive, massive pigs." On the property, the quirkily angled farmhouse of the Hoggetts still stands, ready for the third installment in what Miller has always seen as a trilogy. He said that he will firmly resist pressure from local businessmen to open the pig farm to tourists. "We're not going to turn it into Babeland," he said.

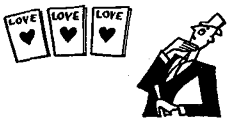
When "Babe: Pig in the City" finished shooting, in September, Quincy, Quigley, Queenie, Quattro, Qualley, and Quizzie were the final group of Babes to be shipped to the farm. "It was really hard letting them go," Kostiuk told me. "And when they were put in their new surroundings they were nervous." They had, after all, not been living the lives of pigs; they had lived as Babe, a privileged being who inhabits a storybook realm "slightly to the left of the twentieth century," as Miller likes to say.

As for George Miller, a change came over him after the first "Babe," and it has escalated with the sequel. "I definitely cannot eat, cannot even smell pork now," he said. "I actually get queasy if I see someone eat bacon. And I was a big carnivore once." Has he sworn off flesh entirely? "No, I eat fish," he said. "Until I make a fish film. Then I'll never eat fish again." —NANCY GRIFFIN



WIND ON CAPITOL HILL

How does Bill Clinton measure up on the Errol Flynn scale?



LISTENING to the Lewinsky tapes the other day, I was thinking of grading the great lovers of history, and wondering if the President would make the list. I devised a scale—the Errol Flynn scale, zero to ten. At the top of the scale are such worthies as Casanova, Wilt Chamberlain, Lothario, King Cole (the royal one, not Nat), François-Félix Faure, Porfirio Rubirosa, Zeus, Jimmy Swaggart, Henry VIII, and Augustus the Strong of Saxony, among others.

The basketball star Wilt Chamberlain, it will be remembered, boasted in 1991 that he had slept with twenty thousand women. If he began at the age of eighteen, this works out to 1.5 assignations a day, including Sundays. If he has kept to this schedule since 1991, he has by now slept with a number equivalent to an eighth of the population of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Félix Faure, the President of France from 1895 until 1899, is on the list for the manner of his death, in the Élysée, on February 16, 1899. Faure had a seizure while seated in a chair that had been specially constructed, it is said, for him to enjoy the favors of a Mme. Marguerite Steinheil. In dying he grasped her hair with such terminal vigor that she had to be cut loose with sabres wielded by members of the Garde Républicaine who were hastily summoned from their posts—the only practical use of the sabres anyone could remember.

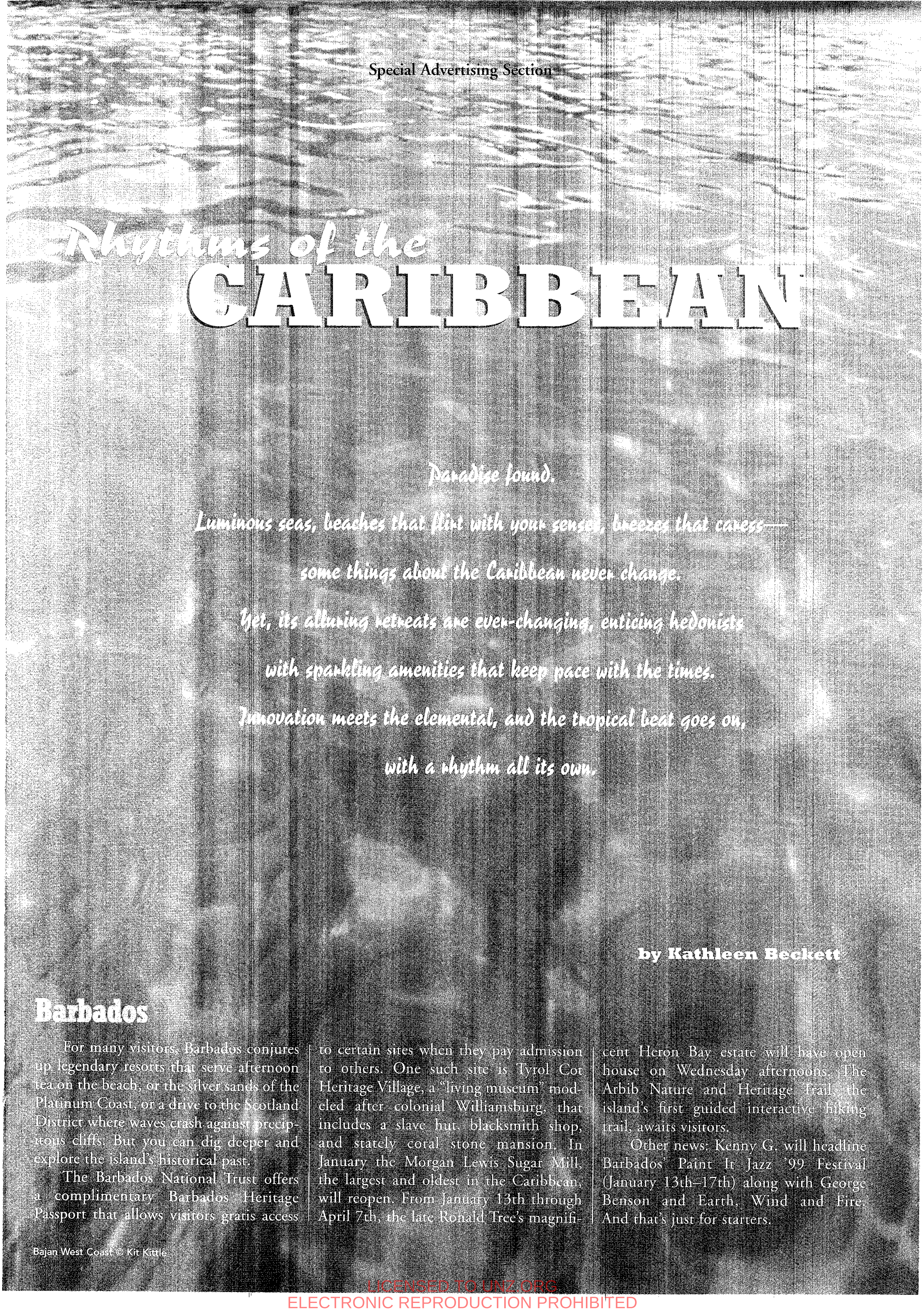
As for Augustus the Strong, he was an early-eighteenth-century Saxon prince who had three hundred illegitimate children, including one who became a maréchal of France. Augustus the Strong had a number of parlor tricks to impress women, one of them being to crush a horseshoe, another to ride bareback into a barn and chin himself on a crossbeam, picking up the horse between his knees.

At the bottom of the Errol Flynn scale would be eunuchs, the castrati choirs, and various Popes (excluding the Borgias). I had put Goofy on the list, but it turns out that Goofy has a son—possibly illegitimate, since nowhere in the Disney canon can I find a Mrs. Goofy. I was surprised at this, because nothing in Goofy's demeanor suggests a formidable sexual drive, what the Japanese newspapers delicately refer to, in President Clinton's case, as a "lower-half problem."

Now let's consider the President's case. In my youth, we referred to our sexual endeavors in baseball terms. Getting to first base meant that you had kissed the object of your affection; a French kiss got you moving along the base path to second, which meant fondling the bosom of said deponent (I'm dipping into the terminology of the Starr report). Third base was what one can well guess—the Hot Corner indeed!—and reaching home plate meant, as we phrased it, having "gone all the way."

In the light of these familiar baseball terms, the President's record is rather disheartening. A study of the Lewinsky matter suggests that the President has been on base ten times, most of his hits getting him only to second. As for getting home, he invariably gets "hung up" between third base and the plate, inevitably retreating to third. All in all, a sorry performance, practically at the level of celibacy—on the Errol Flynn scale, somewhere in the neighborhood of .0002, and hardly worth anyone's time, much less Congress's.

—GEORGE PLIMPTON



Bajan West Coast © Kit Kittle

Rhythms of the CARIBBEAN

Paradise found.

Luminous seas, beaches that flirt with your senses, breezes that caress—

some things about the Caribbean never change.

Yet, its alluring retreats are ever-changing, enticing hedonists

with sparkling amenities that keep pace with the times.

Innovation meets the elemental, and the tropical beat goes on,

with a rhythm all its own.

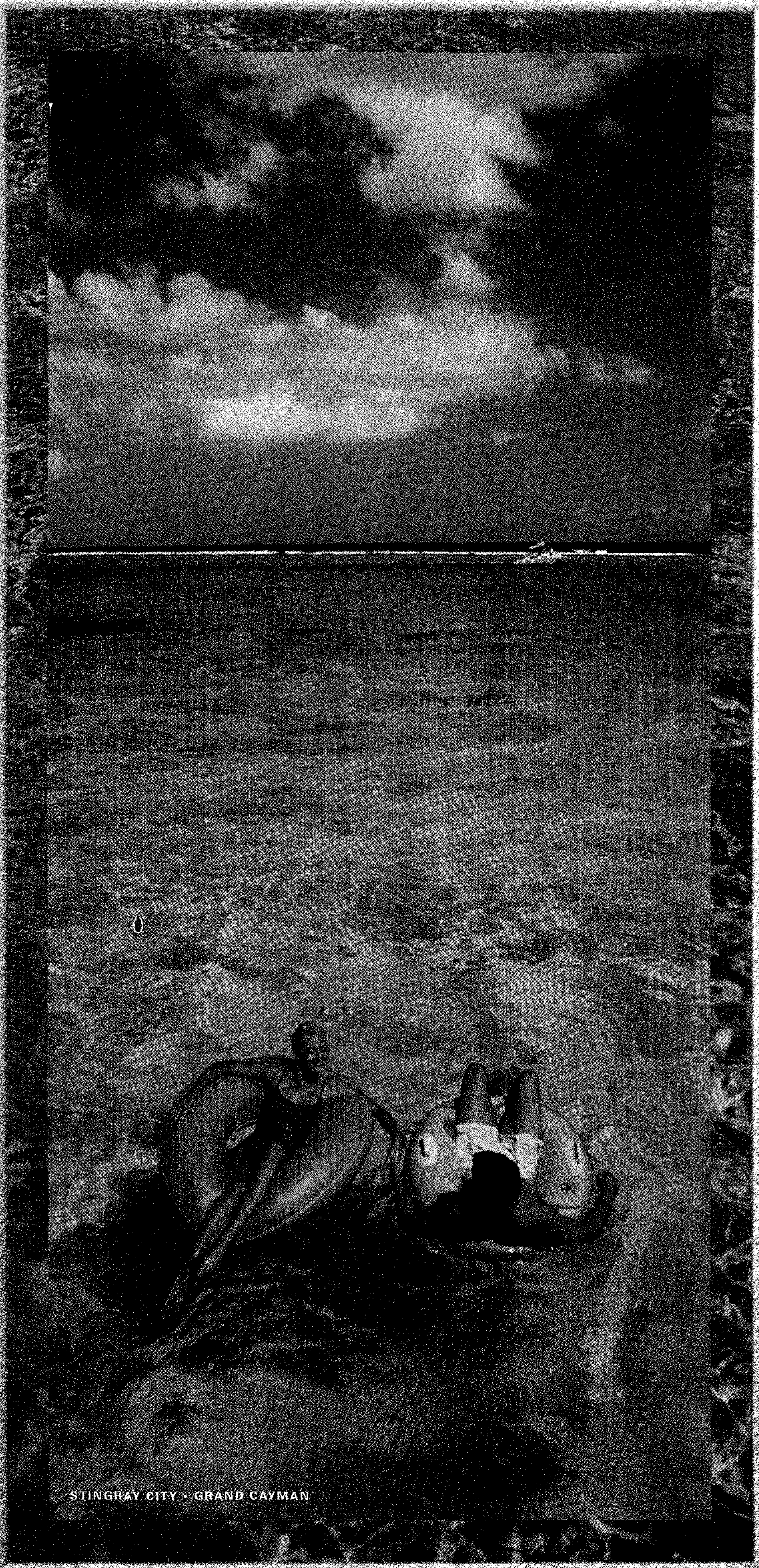
by Kathleen Beckett

Barbados

For many visitors, Barbados conjures up legendary resorts that serve afternoon tea on the beach, or the silver sands of the Platinum Coast, or a drive to the Scotland District where waves crash against precipitous cliffs. But you can dig deeper and explore the island's historical past.

The Barbados National Trust offers a complimentary Barbados Heritage Passport that allows visitors gratis access to certain sites when they pay admission to others. One such site is Tyrol Cot Heritage Village, a "living museum" modeled after colonial Williamsburg, that includes a slave hut, blacksmith shop, and stately coral stone mansion. In January the Morgan Lewis Sugar Mill, the largest and oldest in the Caribbean, will reopen. From January 13th through April 7th, the late Ronald Tree's magnificent Heron Bay estate will have open house on Wednesday afternoons. The Arbib Nature and Heritage Trail, the island's first guided interactive hiking trail, awaits visitors.

Other news: Kenny G. will headline Barbados' Paint It Jazz '99 Festival (January 13th–17th) along with George Benson and Earth, Wind and Fire. And that's just for starters.



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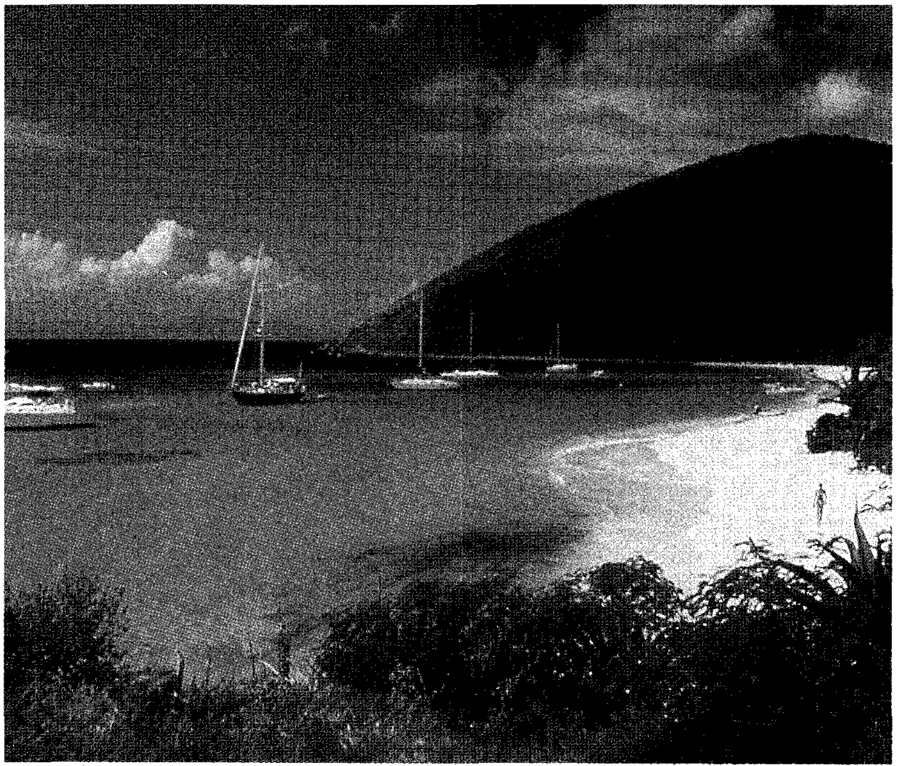
The British Virgin Islands

This remarkable collection of more than sixty islands, some uninhabited, others home to world-class resorts, are sprinkled in the azure sea east of Puerto Rico. Boaters love the BVI because land is ever in sight, a palm-fringed island always in the distance, guiding, beckoning, providing safe harbor.

Visitors can view the bracing spectacle of billowing white sails against blue sea at the December 6th Pusser's Challenge race in Tortola. They can even attend the skipper's meeting at the BVI Yacht Club the night before, stay for the party, and offer to serve as ballast on a boat competing in the races the next day. There's another party at the finish line where prizes are awarded. The time-honored ritual is the same for races at the club throughout the year.

Another island specialty is Fungi music, a spicy mix from Africa of guitar, banjo, saxophone, percussion, and vocals. Hear what local bands are cooking up at the Fungi Band Christmas Fiesta on December 19th in Tortola. Fans of steel drum music can attend the annual Steel Band Christmas Concert December 12th.



Ketch a glimpse: One of the many serene cays that beautify BVI.

The Cayman Islands

Peeking out from the ocean northwest of Jamaica are three mountaintops flattened by time that have risen more than 23,000 feet from the ocean floor below. Known as The Cayman Islands, they are revered for their extensive coral formations and offer some of the best diving and snorkeling in the world. At renowned Stingray City, the adventurous can literally cavort with a bevy of stingrays—weaving and dancing together a mere twelve feet below the ocean's surface. Now there's an underwater photo op.

Pedro St. James historic restoration

Grand Cayman, the largest of the islands, boasts a bustling capitol, George Town. A leisurely stroll will acquaint you with its historic colonial architecture and its small but fascinating Cayman Islands National Museum. History buffs will rejoice in George Town's recently completed Pedro St. James National Historic Site. Due to a $7.5 million impeccable restoration, a traditional late eighteenth-century, three-story great house rises majestically from the bluff. The site commemorates the birthplace of Caymanian democracy.

A trip east from George Town by bus, car, or scooter will take you to Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, a preserve that is home to wild orchids, the rare blue iguana, and the brilliant green Cayman parrot. Further on, East End offers blow holes where ocean geysers spurt from the calcified coral ledge. When traveling around the island, music lovers will want to keep an eye out for Lammie, or Barefoot Man and his band, who perform indigenous music.

George Town abuts Seven Mile Beach to the north, where all manner of water sports and luxury hotels are to be found. You may want to proceed to the Cayman Turtle Farm, north of Seven Mile Beach in West Bay, to observe turtles in every stage of development. Some are huge centenarians weighing more than six hundred pounds. Don't pass up a visit to the nearby tiny hamlet of Hell, where the local post office permits you to send postcards directly from this rather unique location.

If you scuba dive, fish, or just like to explore, head for Grand Cayman's sisters, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. Both offer exhilarating dive sites and some of the most outstanding deep-sea fishing anywhere. Serious divers and anglers prevail, and you're likely to see your share of wet suits and hear more than a few tales about the one that got away.

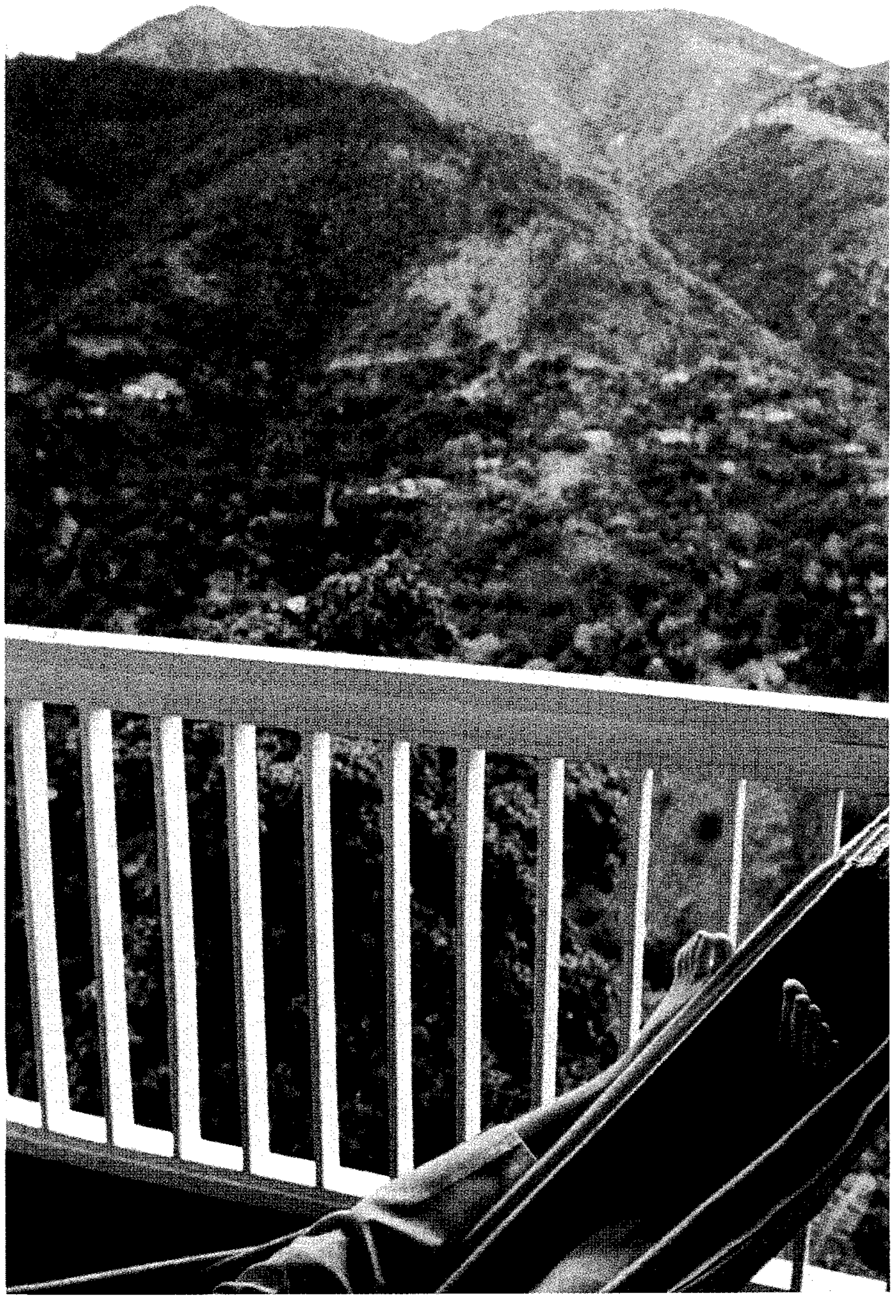
Dominica

Straddled by the Caribbean on its west and the Atlantic on its east, Dominica calls itself "the nature island" and takes pride in being a favorite eco destination. Thanks to the two diverse oceans that cradle the island, scuba diving and snorkeling are superb here and whale watching is a major attraction. The island recently took steps to establish its first marine reserve with a "champagne" dive site fed by a subaquatic bubbling spring. Back on dry land, visit the first Natural World Heritage Site in the Caribbean, the Morne Trois Pitons National Park. How beautiful is the island? As Christopher Columbus once wrote, Dominica must be seen to be believed.

Jamaica

High up in the lush hills that spike Jamaica's interior, where the sun is strong and the air is cool, farmers grow Blue Mountain coffee, considered one of the finest and certainly one of the most expensive, in the world. Down along the beaches that rim the island, locals line pits in the golden sand with fragrant pimento wood and banana leaves to grill spicy jerk, which is sold wrapped in paper to anyone with a few bucks and a hearty appetite. That, in a coconut shell, is the beauty of Jamaica: its glorious variety. From great, modern resorts to historic great houses, bustling towns brimming with duty-free shops to tropical forests exploding with exotic flora, Jamaica is full of delights for every taste.

The drama and diversity of the land is a priceless asset—and now there are even more ways for visitors to experience and enjoy it. Take a brief canoe trip, for instance, down The Great River outside Montego Bay to a clearing site. At night. By torch light. With a buffet dinner, open bar, and entertainment awaiting. After a two-year break "The Great River Party" is back, offering a memorable night out.



Pause that refreshes: Lush Blue Mountain peaks tower above Jamaica's Kingston.

The Cran Brook Flower Forest recently opened outside Ocho Rios. Its extensive 120 acres provide a window on Jamaica's tropical beauty, with a rainforest as well as orchid and anthurium gardens. Eco-tourism gets a boost with the recent arrival of the Guardsman's Serenity Fishing and Wildlife Sanctuary outside Kingston. A mini zoo and farm protect a hundred species of wildlife on the sanctuary's fifty acres. The ungainly ostrich enjoys a new preserve at the Cashoo Ostrich Park, on Jamaica's south coast, which is a combination nature park and commercial ostrich-rearing farm. There are some surprises, too: endangered West Indian Whistling Ducks and an herbal garden with fifty-one varieties of Caribbean herbs.

Martinique

With its mix of palm trees and French style, Martinique is a tropical Riviera. This large French West Indies island prides itself on the excellence of its cuisine and the beauty of its women. Visitors will find even more attributes to appreciate: wonderful shopping, topless beaches, and historical sights including colonial plantations and La Pagerie, birthplace of Empress Josephine.

Those who yearn to converse with the locals can get beyond "c'est magnifique" by enrolling in the Chamber of Commerce's weeklong intensive language program with the option to live with a host Martinique family. *C'est une bonne idée, non?*

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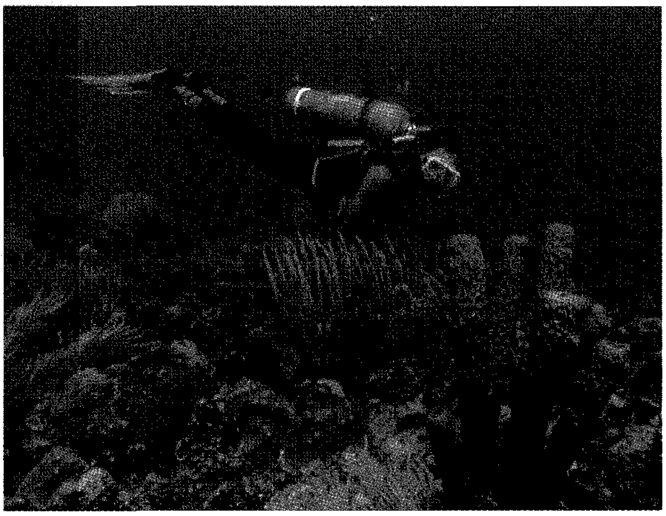
Puerto Rico

Being the hub for air traffic throughout the Caribbean means there are no further flight connections for visitors arriving here from the United States—you land, you're there, you're on your way to the beach. It all makes Puerto Rico the perfect place for quick escapes to the sun.

But why rush? Better to meander along the ancient blue cobblestones of Old San Juan, under wrought iron balconies spilling bougainvillea blossoms at your feet. Or hike through El Yunque, the only tropical rainforest in the United States Forest System. Or simply sit back and relax with a piña colada, the luscious elixir invented on this island.

Puerto Rico has some new attractions for those wishing to linger and enjoy: The Café Bohemio and a terrace tapas bar, El Picoteo, join The Parrot Club with its creative spin on Latin food in charming Old San Juan. New to the metro San Juan scene is Restaurant Urdin with gourmet cuisine. An eighteen-hole golf course recently opened at Dorado del Mar. A new visitor's center at the Arecibo Observatory, which houses the world's largest radar/radio telescope, offers bilingual interactive exhibits and video presentations that provide an introduction to the world of astronomy. (If the observatory looks familiar, it was featured in the movie "Contact" with Jodie Foster.)

Next year San Juan will have its own world-class national museum, the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, which will promote the appreciation of Puerto Rico's visual arts from the seventeenth century to the present. The museum's seven-and-a-half acre site will include fourteen permanent exhibition galleries, an atrium, theatre, museum shop, conservation laboratory, restaurant, and café.



Excellent diving options in Puerto Rico's coral reef waters.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Meandering across 150 miles of sea are the thirty-two islands that make up St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Only eight are inhabited: St. Vincent, Bequia, Mustique, Union, Mayreau, Palm, Petit St. Vincent, and Canouan. They're all beauties, but the place to be January 27th through February 10th is Mustique, when the Annual Blues Festival at Basil's Bar gets under way.

And although it's not as well known as some of its sister islands, little Canouan is getting a longer airport runway and a new casino in anticipation of more visitors. The Big Point Casino is being modeled on Old World architectural landmarks and *salles privés.*

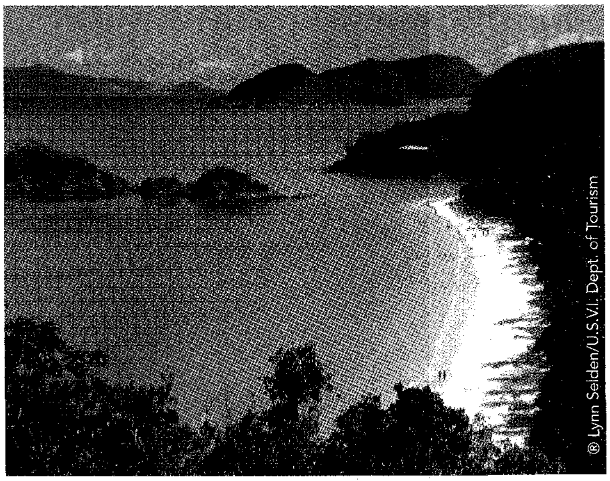
United States Virgin Islands

There's St. Thomas, the duty-free shopping mecca of the Caribbean. There's St. John, with its natural beauty both on land and undersea protected for generations to come by the National Park Service. And then there's St. Croix, with it's sorbet-colored colonial towns and emerald fairways. Everybody has a favorite United States Virgin Island—but no one would want to miss exploring them all.

On St. Croix, for instance, Heritage Tours offers a new series of one-and-a-half-hour guided tours of the historic buildings, courtyards, and marketplaces of Christiansted and Frederiksted. Or see another side of island life on a new two-story party boat, the Reef Queen II.

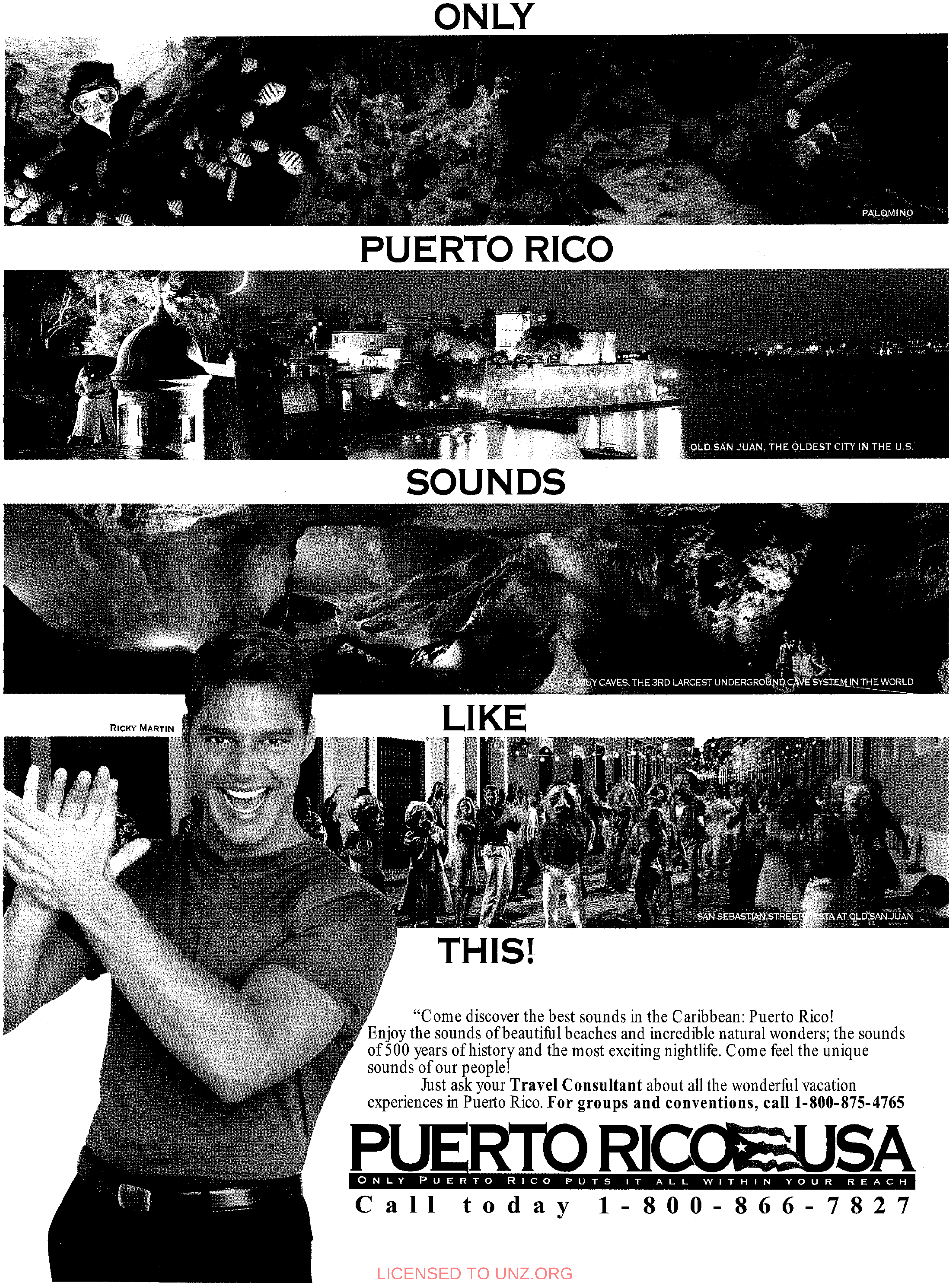
There's good news for fans of Coral World Marine Park & Underwater Observatory: St. Thomas' most popular tourist attraction has recently reopened after a two million dollar refurbishment. A 360-degree, glass-enclosed viewing area unveils the mysteries of the underwater world. Horse and pony tours, conducted by Half Moon Stables along a secluded trail that wends through quiet hills and undiscovered beaches, reveals areas of the island that most visitors never see. Thunderhawk Trail Guides, a new hiking tour company on St. John, leads nature lovers along trails first trod by the Taino Indians thousands of years ago.

All three islands are celebrating their 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery with festivals, workshops, and exhibitions. The United States Virgin Islands were trailblazers: They were the first on what is now U.S. soil to free all of their slaves.



© Lynn Selden/U.S.V.I. Dept. of Tourism

Secluded Trunk Bay in St. John: Underwater trail popular with novice snorkelers.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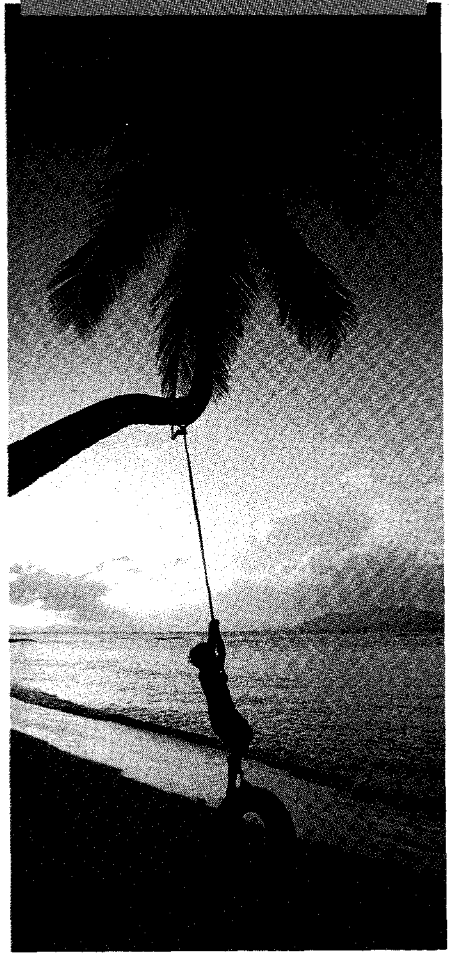

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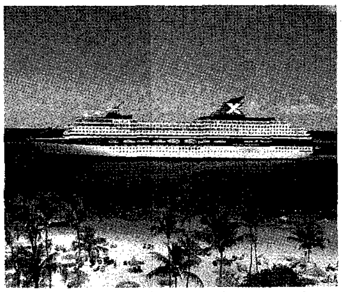
Cruise (and Yachting) News



One of Celebrity's floating pleasure palaces

There are different ways to view the Caribbean islands via the sea and they range from major cruise ships, with all of their amenities, to small boats suitable for two (plus crew) with lots of privacy. **Celebrity Cruises**, the world's newest, most modern fleet of cruise ships plies the Caribbean waters on seven-to-eleven-night sails out of Fort Lauderdale or San Juan. Itineraries are tailored to take in dozens of the most alluring ports throughout the islands.

Celebrity Cruises has been rated one of the three best cruise lines in the world, and with good reason. It's luxury all the way, from the museum-quality art that hangs on the walls to the Michel Roux menus served in the dining rooms. And because the food practically never stops, most Celebrity Cruise ships have an AquaSpa where passengers can work out with a personal fitness trainer—and follow up the session with a soothing aromatherapy massage.

Celebrity Cruises promises to give guests what they've never experienced before, and some inventive thinking has gone into making good on the promise. Where else can you find a martini bar with more than twenty different versions of the classic cocktail? Or handrolled cigars? Or special programs for children geared to different age groups?

Now here's a unique concept: hop a freighter and see the Caribbean, and beyond. **Ivaran Lines** has two cargo ships that take on passengers—with style. Gracious dining rooms, dance floors, health spas, sundecks, lounges, and even a white baby grand piano are among the amenities. These are freighters unlike any you've ever seen (provided you've ever seen one). A good proportion of staterooms are designed for single travelers, and itineraries are geared towards those who really want to get away from it all. The Americana accommodates eighty-eight passengers on twenty-three-day voyages around the Caribbean and South America's north coast. The smaller San Antonio takes twelve passengers on one-way or round-trip (forty-eight day) sails between the United States and South America's east coast. And the price is right.

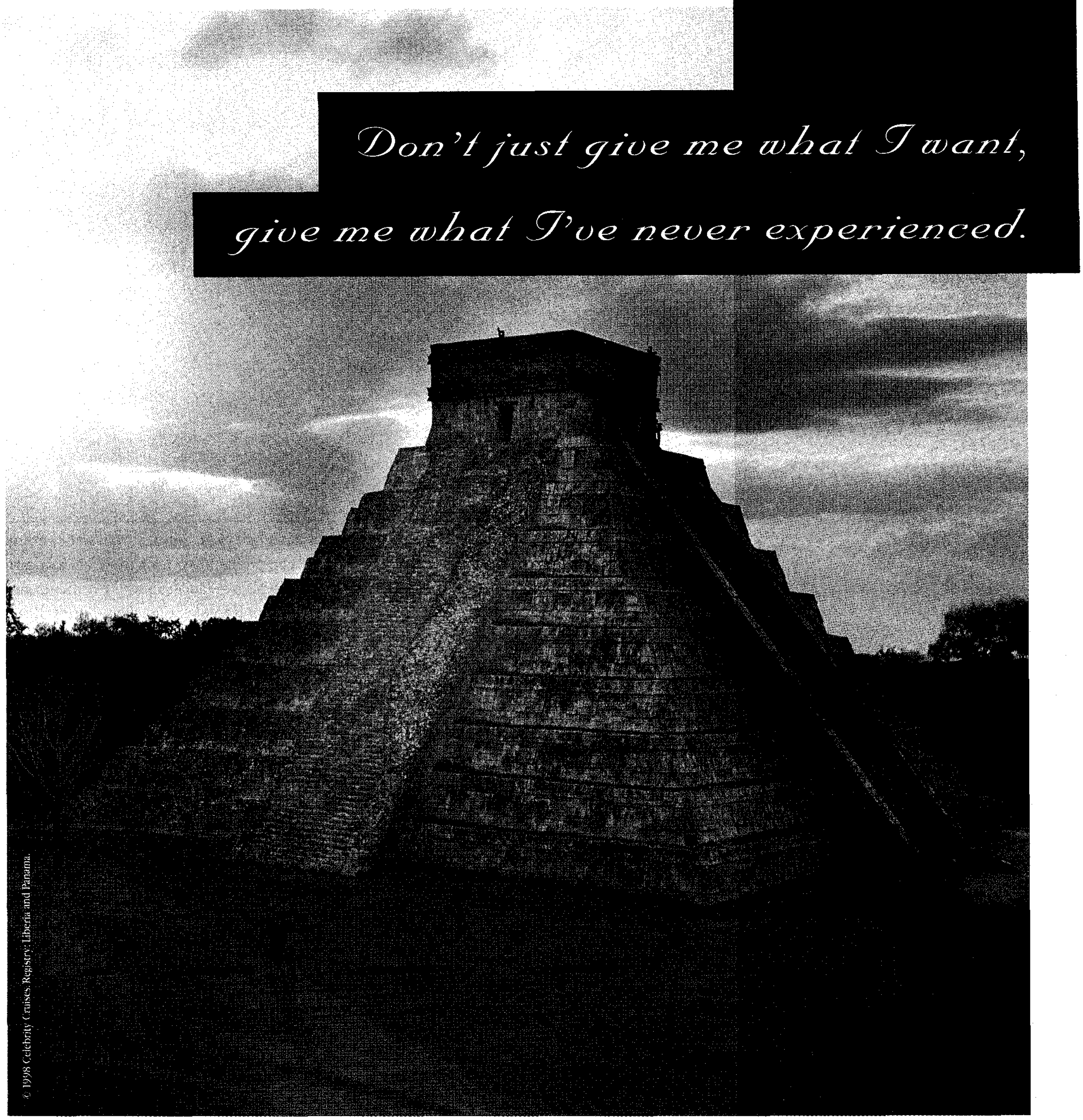
Sailing aboard a charter yacht is a totally different, totally pampering experience. **Port Yacht Charters'** fleet of boats range from sloops to multihulls (catamarans) accommodating as many as ten passengers or as few as two. You set your own itinerary, deciding when you want to sail, when you want to snorkle, when you're ready to dine under the stars. The boats sail around the Windward, Leeward, and British Virgin Islands.

Yacht Taboo skipper David Hartstone used to work in the music business and likes to spin tales of his high jinks with guitarists Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton as he weaves his state-of-the-art schooner around the Caribbean. Departing out of St. Thomas, Yacht Taboo sails to the United States and British Virgin Islands, the French West Indies, the Grenadines, or wherever else guests want to go. Hartstone's wife Miranda oversees the galley and produces gourmet treats like shrimp and scallop Mornay in puff pastry, while five crew members look after from four to twelve passengers. Enjoy a week of waterskiing, scuba diving, caviar and champagne, or whatever impulse strikes.

And for those who'd rather observe underwater sea life from the comfort of the ship's lounge, **American Canadian Cruise Lines** has installed full-color, underwater exploration cameras on its fleet of small ships so passengers can enjoy a "scuba dive" while remaining high and dry.

Fashion That Travels Well

Anyone headed to the Caribbean needs a swimsuit, sure. A pair of shorts, naturally. A pretty chemise or dress shirt for dinner, of course. But use your head and take along a hat. It's important to protect your scalp, hair, and face from the penetrating rays of the tropics, and **Tilley Endurables** (800-363-8737) offers a number of smart ways to do it. Tilley hats have become classics, as popular on Hollywood sets as on African safaris. What makes them so special? The grommet-ventilated chapeaux won't shrink; they repel rain, can be machine-washed, and are replaced free if they wear out. Oh, yes, and they float, which could also come in handy. You're covered, no matter what happens. ●


Don't just give me what I want,
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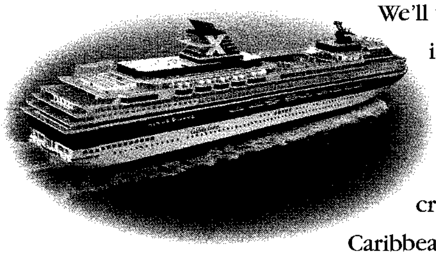

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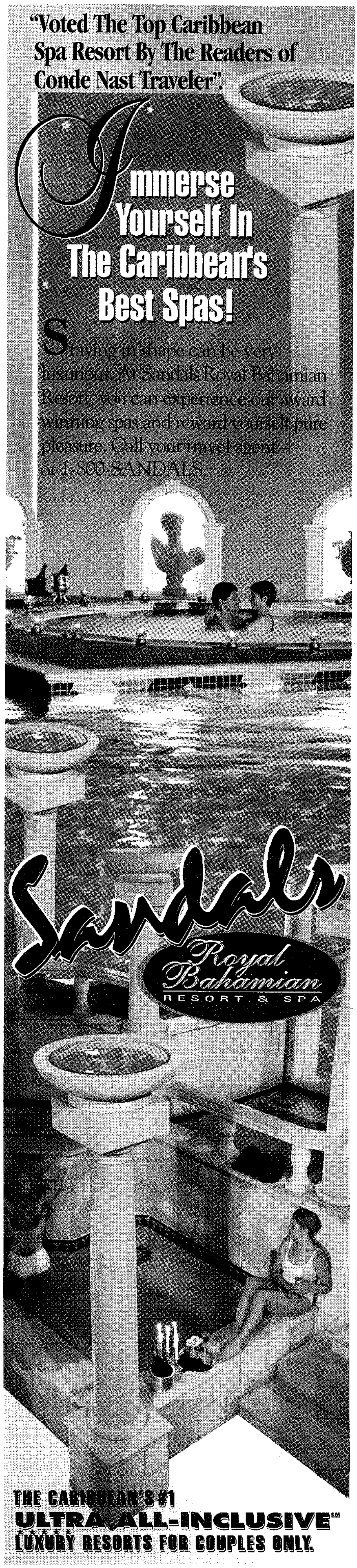
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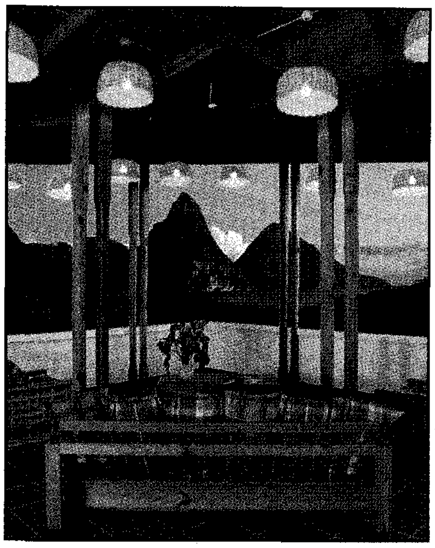


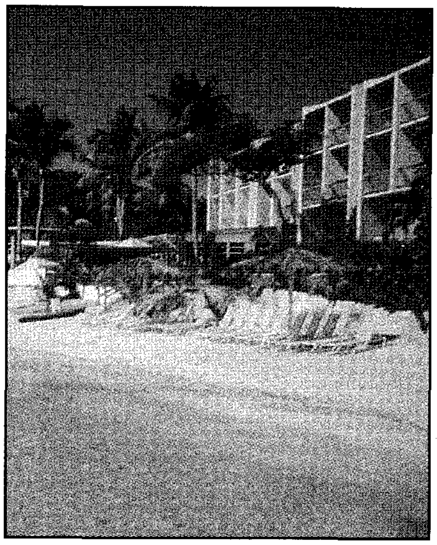
As Nick and Karolin Troubetzkoy were building their collection of luxury cottages that climb a hill from the sea, they struck a deal: artist friends from Europe could come and stay for free if they donated paintings. When not looking out at the jaw-gaping views of the Pitons, guests often want to own the art hanging on their walls. Now, thanks to an art gallery opening in the hotel on December 20th, they can. Some of the hotel's artwork, however, is not for sale. Local artists' hand-painted vines grow around columns and celestial shapes shine in gold from cobalt-blue ceilings.

BOLONGO BAY BEACH CLUB AND VILLAS

St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

800-524-4746

Twenty-five years ago Dick and Joyce Doumeng opened Bolongo Bay with what they called a "Club Everything" concept. Their forward-thinking approach to hospitality is perpetuated today by their son, who manages the seventy-five beachfront rooms curved around a bay. Guests can choose between an all-inclusive plan and a semi-inclusive continental plan. The latter is for those who might wish to dine elsewhere while enjoying full access to the resort's sports galore—whether windsurfing or weight lifting, taking a scuba diving lesson, or a day sail to St. John. If that's not enough to keep guests busy, now there are à la carte spa offerings—facials, body treatments, and massages. Karaoke nights at Iggie's Beach Bar and Restaurant are on either plan—for those who have the nerve.



THE BUCCANEER

Gallows Bay, St. Croix, U.S.V.I.

800-255-3881

Crowning the hilltop that overlooks pastel Christiansted, this longest-running resort in the Caribbean is celebrating its fiftieth birthday this year. What began as an eleven-room inn is today a 150-room luxury resort, with two four-bedroom villas due to open December 20th. The resort is run by the grandchildren of the family that opened it, who recently initiated a new hospitality training program to keep The Buccaneer at the top of its league for another half-century.

CLUB PEACE & PLENTY

Exuma, Out Islands Of The Bahamas

800-525-2210

FERNANDEZ BAY VILLAGE

Cat Island, Out Islands Of The Bahamas

800-940-1905

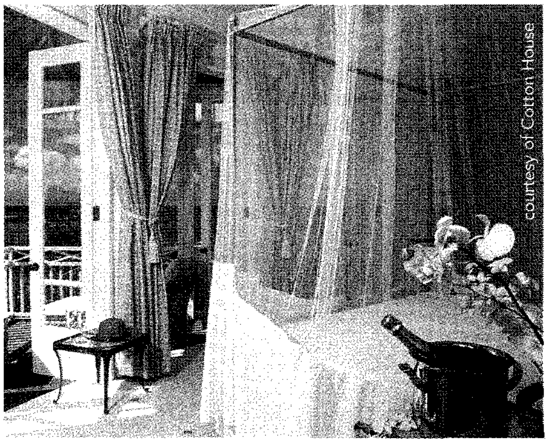
The archipelago of islands that is the Bahamas provides its own distinct pleasures. Over the years, the old stone entrance at intimate, thirty-five room Club Peace & Plenty in Exuma has welcomed Prince Philip and King Constantine of Greece. But nevertheless, everyone is made to feel like family. On Cat Island, revel in the sheer beauty of the sugary sand beaches, the feathery shade of casuarina pines, the golden weave of local straw work. What better place to savor the solitude than in one of the twelve seaside stone villas and cottages of Fernandez Bay Village?

COTTON HOUSE

Mustique, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

800-826-2809

Mustique is a home away from home for Mick Jagger, Princess Margaret, and anyone lucky enough to stay at the island's only hotel, Cotton House. The pace is slow, and favorite activities include naps on the veranda or tea poolside at private Messel's Folly (named after the famed British designer Oliver Messel, who masterminded its sumptuous interiors). Now there's even more of a reason to stay and indulge: five new rooms were just added, bringing the hotel's total to twenty. And a "pillow menu" consisting of nine choices insures pleasant dreams for every type of sleeper.

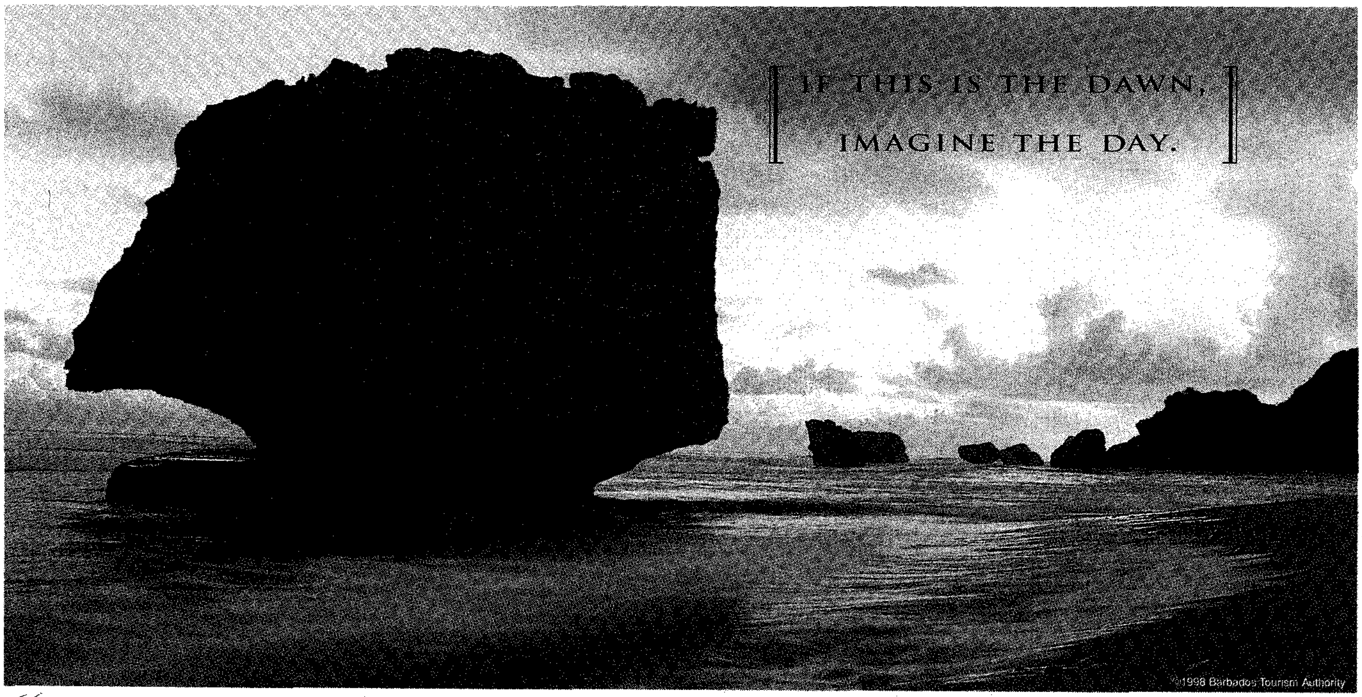


courtesy of Cotton House

THE GREAT RESORTS OF NASSAU

The Islands Of The Bahamas

Five of the top resorts in Nassau assure that visitors will receive a high standard of quality. Each is located on broad, beautiful Cable Beach, ten minutes from downtown Nassau, where horse-drawn surreys trot past pastel colonial buildings. Bargain-hunting and duty-free shops abound, as do a variety of restaurants, the colorful Straw Market, museums, and gardens. Members of The Great Resorts of Nassau are The Nassau Beach Hotel, **800-331-6358**; Nassau Marriott Resort & Crystal Palace Casino, **800-222-7466**; Radisson Cable Beach Resort, **800-333-3333**; Sandals Royal Bahamian Resort & Spa,



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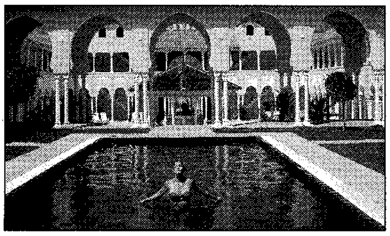

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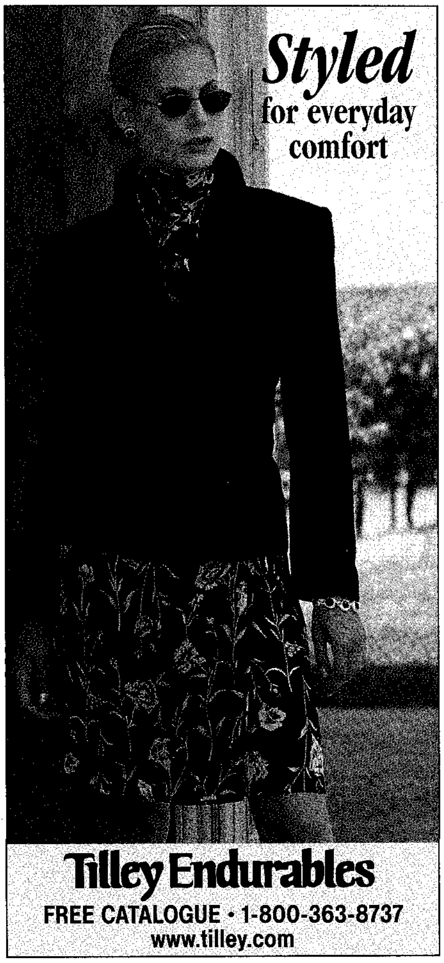

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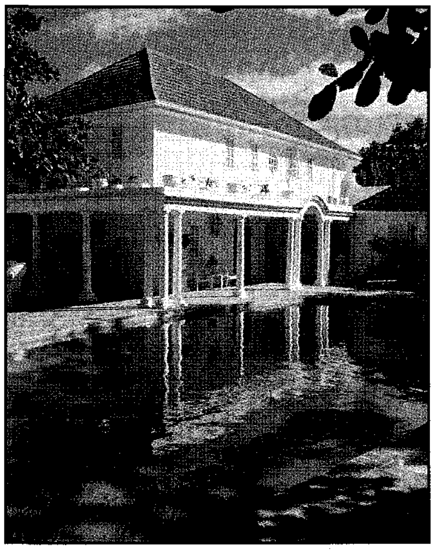


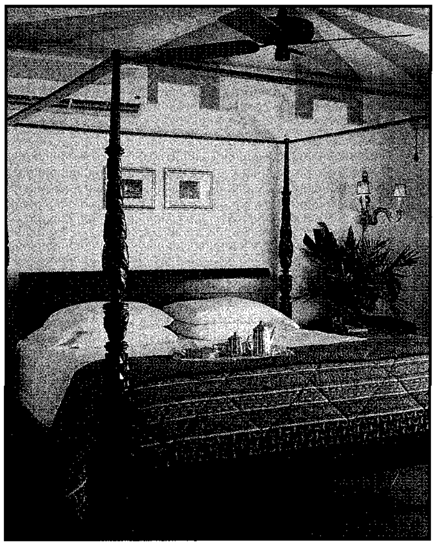
For generations, visitors have come to Half Moon and done nothing more than venture from their elegantly appointed rooms to their lounge chairs by the sea. Now there are other ways to enjoy this Jamaican institution's graceful ways: at the new piano bar, or over afternoon tea in the new upstairs lounge. Those who take advantage of Half Moon's more active offerings can master their golf swing at the David Leadbetter Golf Academy. The Fitness Center has a full gym, and after a strenuous workout reward yourself with pampering services at Half Moon's spa. And there's good news for business professionals—a second twelve-thousand-square-foot conference center is in the works.

HORNED DORSET PRIMAVERA HOTEL

Rincon, Puerto Rico

800-633-1857

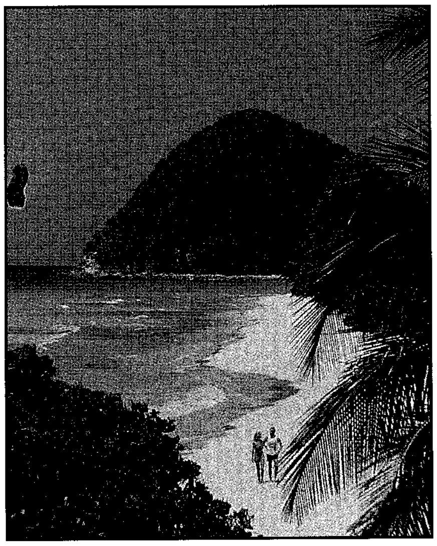
You can bet that a hotel with no telephones, televisions, or radios in its thirty-two rooms (eight have private plunge pools) and no children under twelve puts a premium on tranquility. Be assured that a hotel which bills itself as "a place without activities" places an emphasis on indulgence. Whether sinking into a mahogany four-poster bed, soaking in an opulent marble bath, strolling the private beach, or enjoying six courses of classical French cuisine, the Horned Dorset's purpose is pleasure. Now there are even more reasons to rejoice: the former executive pastry chef of New York's Aureole has just joined the staff. Which may explain another new addition to this Relais & Chateaux property—a gym.



LONG BAY BEACH RESORT & VILLAS

Tortola, BVI

800-729-9599

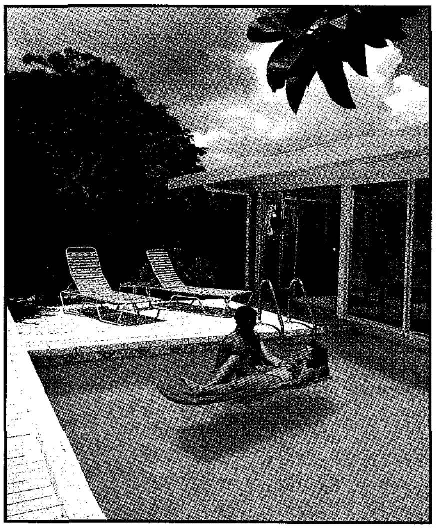


Cupping a crescent of powdery sand and nestled in a hillside is the Long Bay Beach Resort. It has everything a traveler could want—two pools, gourmet dining, night tennis, live music—but it remains most proud that it offers guests the chance to do nothing more than stroll along that gorgeous stretch of sand. Now there are even more ways to take it easy: mid-December the Spa Osun opens, featuring massages and creams that are personally mixed for each guest using a base of local aloe vera and BVI seaweed, salt, and essential oils for a light body scrub—the perfect antidote to winter-dried skin.

PAVILIONS & POOLS HOTEL

St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

800-524-2001



Rebuilt, refurbished, and renovated, Pavilions & Pools reopened this May. The twenty-five totally refreshed villas provide privacy as well as all of the amenities of a hotel, from daily housekeeping to complementary snorkel gear. But it gets better: Pavilions & Pools is the only hotel on St. Thomas to offer private pools. Informal barbeque-style dining is available six nights a weeks at the open bar, Fishpond Terrace. The revised and reasonably priced honeymoon package makes visiting more appealing than ever.

SANDALS

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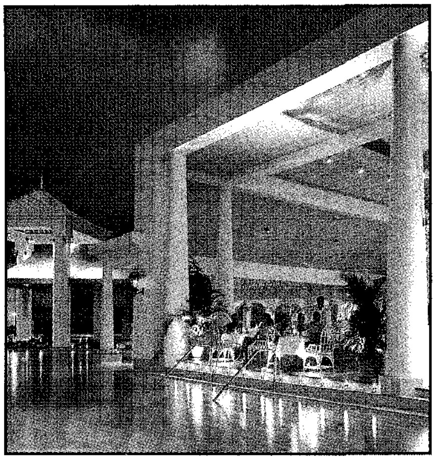
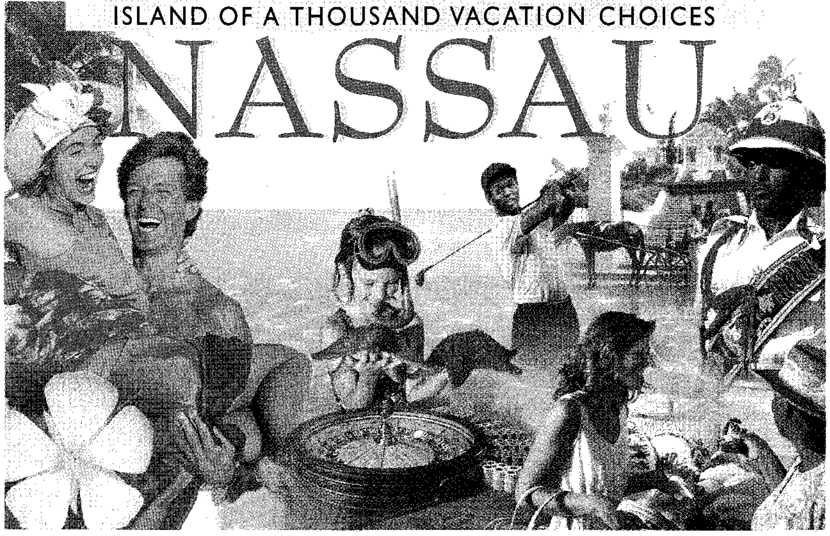
Sandals all-inclusive resorts are known for their liveliness, with every sports activity under the sun and every sort of dining experience—from sushi to formal French—under the stars. News abounds at the ten, couples-only Sandals resorts that extend throughout Jamaica, St. Lucia, Antigua, and The Islands Of The Bahamas. Two sister, all-inclusive Beaches resorts are now open for singles and children in Jamaica and the Turks & Caicos (with two more planned for Jamaica and Barbados). This year nearly all of the properties got new spas (access to a sister property's spa is always available). The latest in beauty and body treatments, such as Moor mud wraps, enzyme deep-cleansing facials, and mineral baths are now offered. The news continues: a first-ever casino has been added to Beaches Turks & Caicos, and Sandals Royal Bahamian Resort & Spa has expanded with more than two hundred new rooms. There are now direct charter flights from Newark International Airport to St. Lucia and Antigua. Nickname of the flight? The Sandals Champagne Express.

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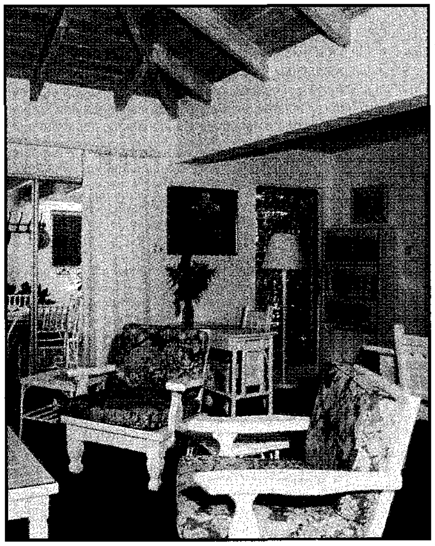

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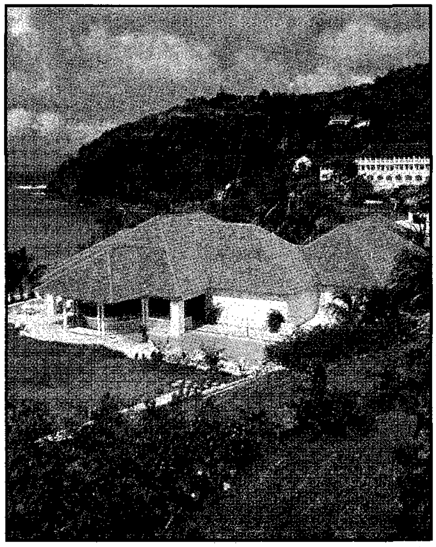

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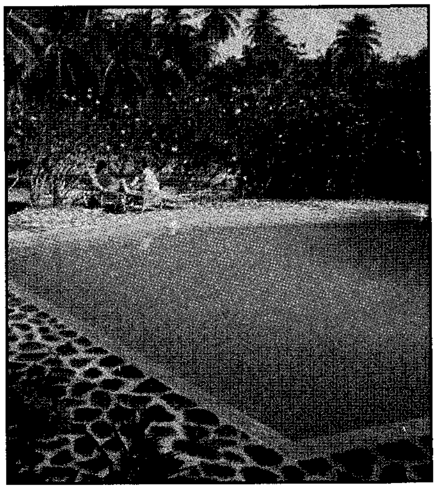

This two-hundred-year-old plantation, owned and operated by the same family for twenty years, has ten rooms in three buildings of hand-cut stone, and is known as an undiscovered treasure of the Caribbean. Those who venture off the beaten path to this quiet island of Bequia and stay at the inn on Spring Bay will discover treasures indeed: papaya, bananas, and coconuts fresh from the plantation gardens, fish right out of the nets of local fisherman, and plenty of hammocks for post-prandial siestas.

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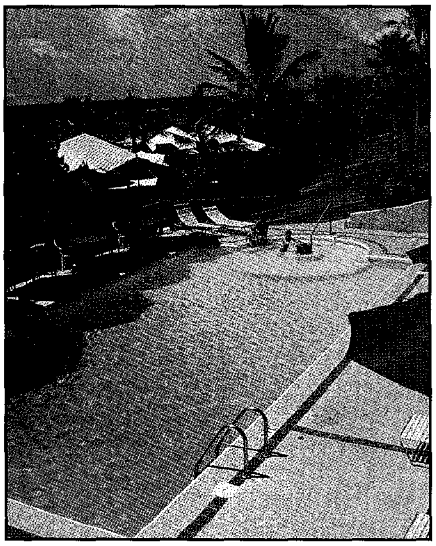
The Stonington Beach Hotel is in an advantageous position—it is owned and operated by Bermuda College. Many of the graduates in the college's rigorous hospitality program work in the hotel, providing a style of service distinguished not only by its quality but by its enthusiasm as well. The hotel's executive chef and certified hospitality educator Markus Wesch just won the title of Bermuda's Master Chef in the 1998 Master Chef cook-off with his Scallopini of Pork Loin with Southern Comfort mango coulis and black rum and raisin reduction. A mouthful but worth every bite. One of Stonington's biggest businesses is meetings. The hotel has multipurpose rooms, break-out rooms, board rooms, and an amphitheatre for up to 280 people.



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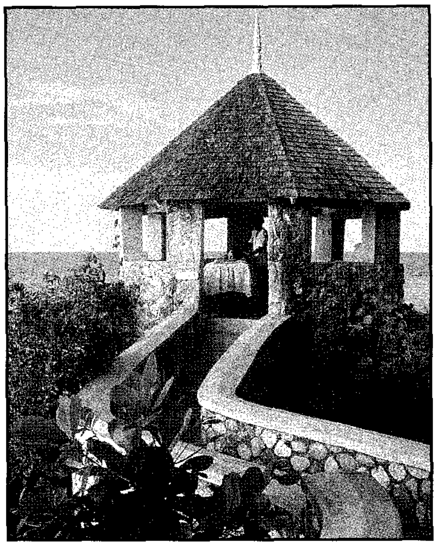

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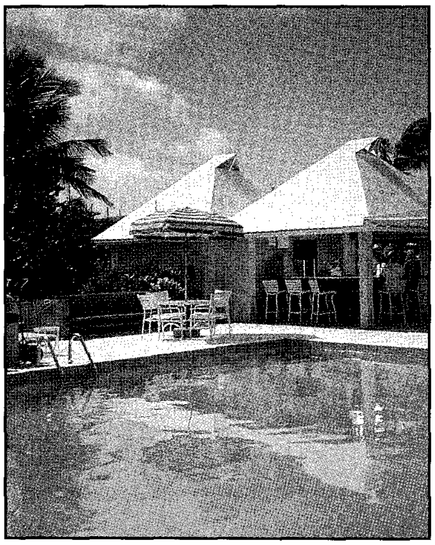

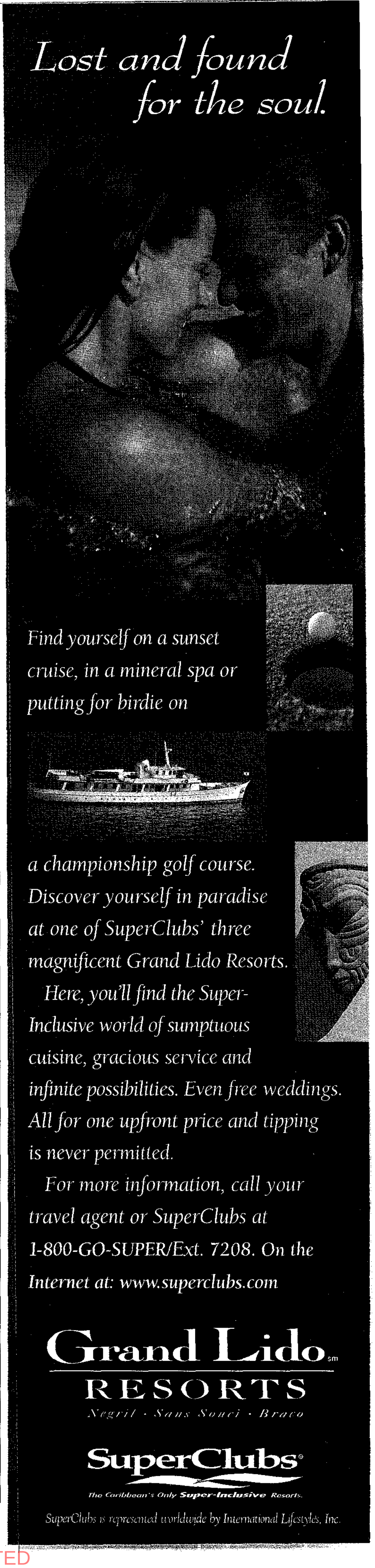

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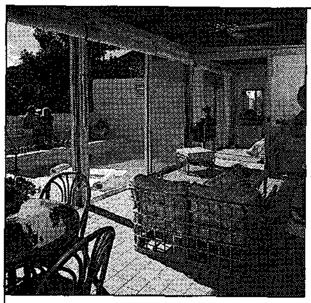

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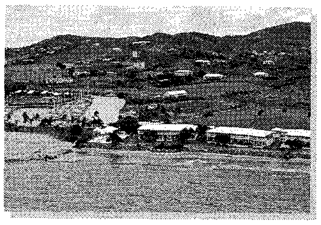

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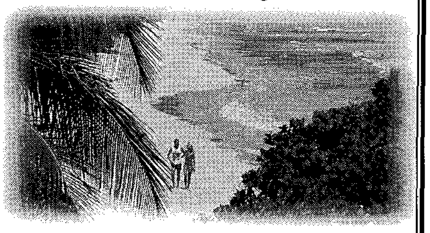

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With water, water everywhere, the hotel takes full advantage of its ocean-front and marina setting. All forty-six rooms face the sea and have either a balcony or terrace for enjoying the view. Even the gourmet Galleon Restaurant is situated so diners can look out at Green Cay Marina. So it comes as no surprise that the hotel's new conference center has a wall constructed of windows that open to tropical breezes and views of the docks and boats. Not a bad way to do business.

LE TOINY

Saint-Barthélemy, F.W.I.

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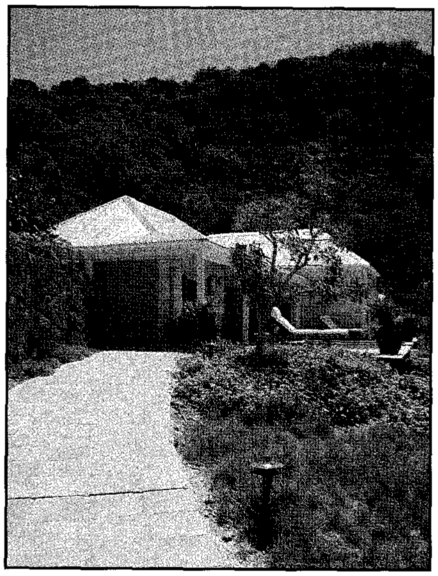

St. Bart's, as the cognoscenti call it, has fast become the favorite haunt of celebrities seeking French chic and Caribbean sunshine. And many stay at Le Toiny, a tony collection of twelve secluded villa-suites situated on an untamed hillside overlooking an unspoiled, pastoral landscape. Each has its own deck and swimming pool, handcrafted mahogany, plantation-style furniture, crisp European linens, and a kitchenette. (Though an outstanding restaurant, Le Gaïac, known for its French and Caribbean cuisine, as well as 24-hour room service, are at the ready.) This small, luxe hotel is a member of the prestigious Relais & Chateaux hotel group. Worthy of note, Le Toiny offers a wonderful summer package at a time when you don't have to share the island's beauty with quite as many guests.

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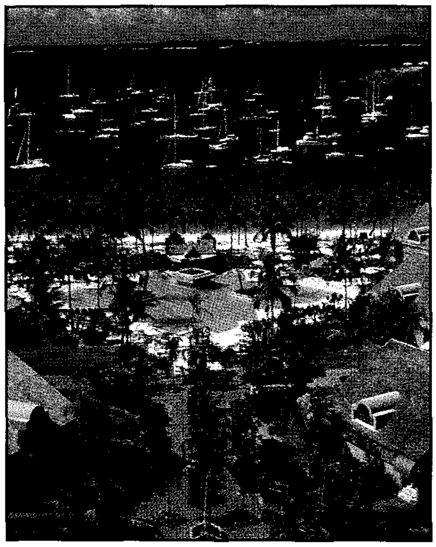

The Westin opened just a year ago with 285 guest rooms and suites as well as ninety-six villas sprinkled across forty-seven beautifully landscaped acres. An array of attractive packages entices visitors to come see what it has to offer. And that's a lot: a gorgeous setting on Great Cruz Bay, three restaurants plus a deli, a fitness center, a kid's club, and a spectacular quarter-acre pool—the largest in the U.S.V.I. There's also a private dock with a shuttle boat that ferries guests to and from St. Thomas. Six lighted tennis courts and a wide range of water sports including snorkeling, scuba diving, windsurfing, kayaking, sailing, and fishing are also available. The resort is minutes from the 11,560-acre Virgin Islands National Park where hiking, nature tours, beaches, and lagoons beckon.

(Kathleen Beckett is a writer whose travel articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, and *Vogue*.)

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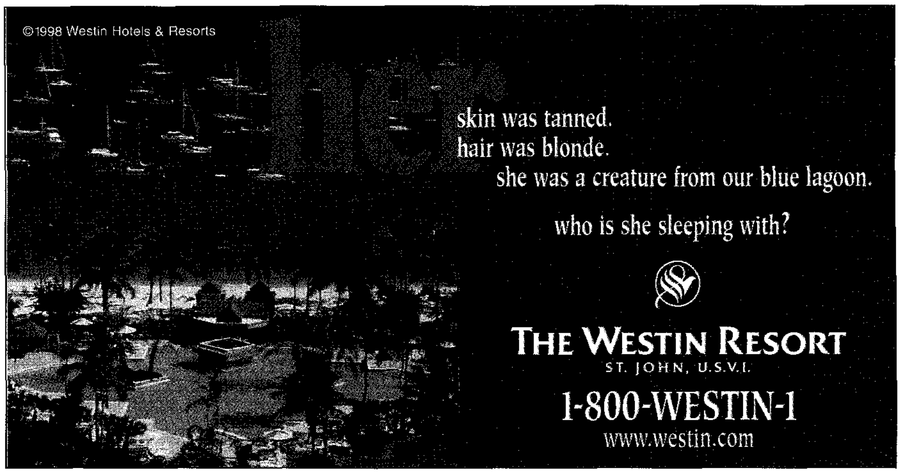
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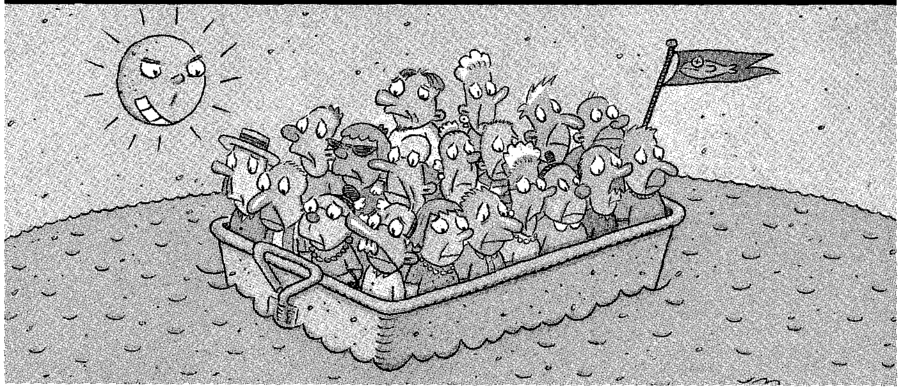

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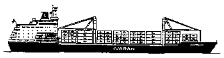

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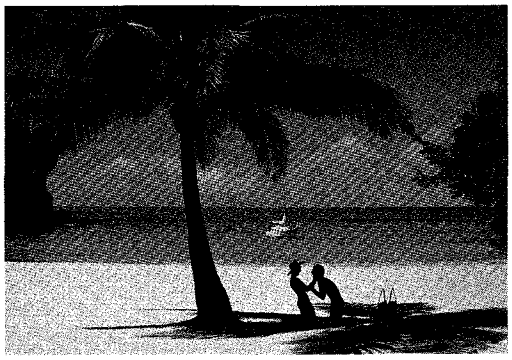

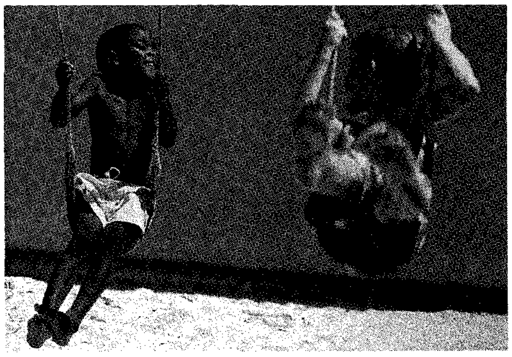

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE LOVER IN JAIL

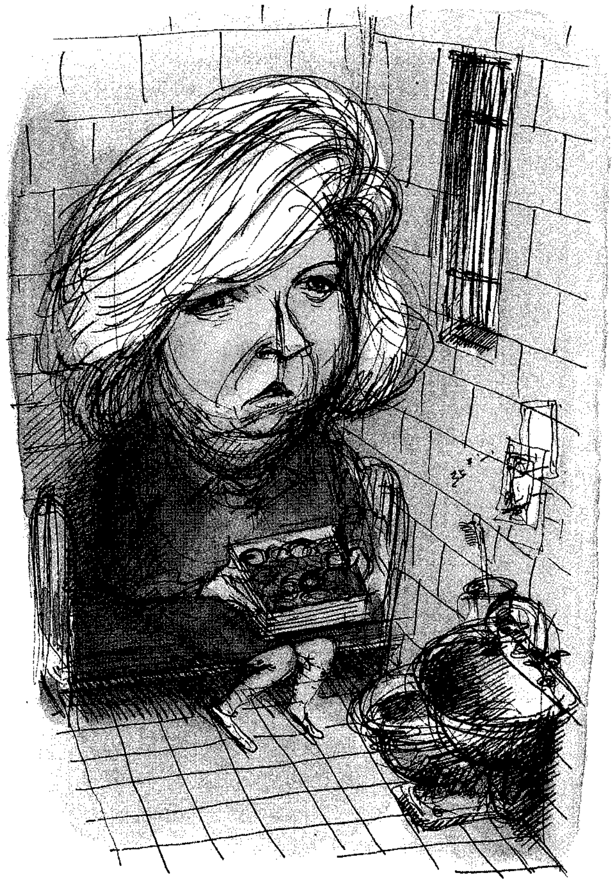
In Texas, the independent counsel got the girl.

BY JANE MAYER

NEXT year, when Congress considers whether to reauthorize the independent-counsel statute, the debate will no doubt focus on Kenneth Starr's four-year investigation of the President. But lawmakers would also be well advised to debrief Linda Jones, or, as she is currently known, Prisoner #29863-077, in the Federal Medical Center, Carswell, on a military base in Fort Worth, Texas. Carswell has a varied population of female inmates, ranging from first-time, nonviolent offenders to murderers. But surely the most exotic prisoner at the moment is Jones, a once glamorous Texas fund-raiser who is best known for her love affair with Henry Cisneros, the former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Jones has been in Carswell since last April, serving a three-and-a-half-year sentence for bank fraud, money laundering, making false statements, and obstruction of justice. Most of these charges stem from misrepresentations made on a home-mortgage application, and are infractions so minor that—according to Walter Dellinger, a Duke School of Law professor and a former acting Solicitor General in the Clinton Administration—"you could probably find fifty million Americans" who have done similar things. Jones, however, happened to get involved with a man whose life would later come under the intense legal scrutiny of an independent-counsel investigation, and it eventually became an investigation of her life as well.

In May, 1995, David M. Barrett, a lobbyist who formerly served as the head of Lawyers for Reagan, was appointed as an independent counsel to investigate whether Cisneros, during a background check before his 1993 confirmation hearing, intentionally lied to the F.B.I. about the amount of money he had paid his former mistress, Linda Jones. The matter seemed small, but it was worrisome, because it raised the possibility that the payments were "hush money" related to more serious crimes. So investigators scrutinized every aspect of Cisneros's complicated relationship with Jones. One grand jury was impanelled in Washington, and another in Jones's home town of Lubbock, Texas, where she was living when most of the payments were made. But, in a surprising twist, it is Jones, rather than Cisneros, who now sits in jail. His trial, in a Washington court, has been postponed several times while the judge rules on motions. Things moved more quickly in Texas.



RICHARD THOMPSON

A former Justice Department official calls the indictment of Linda Jones "frightening."

Lubbock is a place so unlovely that, a popular song says, "happiness was Lubbock, Texas, in my rear-view mirror." The town offers few diversions beyond tattoo parlors and college football. But, as David Guinn, Jr., a slight, overworked assistant federal public defender who served as Jones's court-appointed attorney, says, "Lubbock is a great place to be when you're a prosecutor," because "juries out here are very hard-hearted." In the fall of 1997, Jones, her older sister, Patsy Wooten, and her brother-in-law, Allen Wooten—none of whom had prior criminal records—were indicted for bank fraud and other crimes in connection with the Cisneros case. Before they could respond to the charges, the presiding federal judge, Sam Cummings, issued a gag order, so "they couldn't even defend themselves," a family friend, Kathy Simmons, says. On the day of the trial, in January of this year, Jones pleaded guilty, in a settlement intended to spare her sister and brother-in-law jail time. She still faces prosecution in Washington for conspiring with Cisneros and making false statements, and her Washington attorney, Roger Adelman, says that she will not give interviews until the case is over.

The independent counsel's office has also refused to discuss the investigation, and Cisneros, through his lawyers, declined to comment. But the facts can be pieced together from voluminous court records, interviews with friends and family members, and nearly ninety tapes that Jones made, during a period of more than three years, of her phone conversations with Cisneros. She began recording the calls, without his knowledge, in 1990, shortly after he moved to end their romance.

THE affair between Cisneros and Jones, who was then known by her married name, Linda Medlar, began in the spring of 1987, while she was working as a fund-raiser for his reëlection campaign. Cisneros, the first Hispanic to run a major American city, was seeking a fourth term as mayor of San Antonio. At thirty-nine, he pro-

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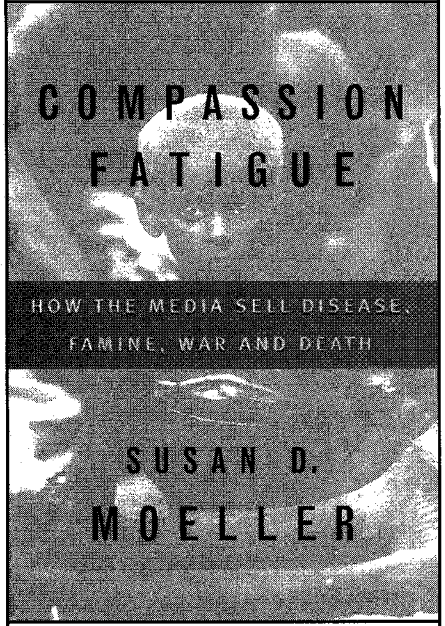

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jected a winning combination of Ivy League polish and ethnic appeal, and had a promising future in the Democratic Party. Medlar was two years younger, an attractive blond and a tough operator. Both Medlar and Cisneros were infatuated with politics, and both were unhappily married. On a fund-raising trip to New York that March, which included a romantic carriage ride through snowy Central Park, they began their affair.

Three months later, Cisneros's wife, Mary Alice, gave birth to his third child—a son, John Paul, who was born with a rare and serious heart condition. Cisneros agonized over whether to leave his family, confessing his torment to so many people that the affair with Medlar became an open secret in Texas. By 1988, he and Medlar were discussing marriage, and Cisneros decided not to seek a fifth term, because he was afraid of putting his family through a public divorce. Shortly after he made that announcement, a San Antonio paper reported that he and Medlar were romantically involved. In response, the Mayor held an impromptu press conference in his front yard and declared his feelings for Medlar. "I am not made of plastic and wiring, but blood and flesh and feeling," he said. "In the course of a lifetime, these things happen. I can't be sorry for life."

Cisneros remained popular, but Medlar was reviled as "a money-grabbing slut," says Floyd Holder, a Lubbock lawyer who handled an early phase of her case. "I represent the cursed, the crippled, and the damned, and she's all three, I'd think." In early 1989, Medlar agreed to divorce her husband, a jeweller and rare-coin dealer, without demanding alimony, and she assumed her maiden name, Linda Jones. Cisneros and his wife had separated, and Jones expected to marry him. But in November of 1989 Cisneros entered the hospital for minor surgery, and a few days later—without any warning to Jones or any explanation—left with his wife, Mary Alice, at his side.

Cisneros lived alone for a while, but he didn't entirely end his involvement with Jones. She claimed that because of her notoriety she could no longer find fund-raising work, and Cisneros began to help her out financially. At the same time, she began to tape their phone conversations, because, she said, she needed to protect herself. By the spring of 1991, Cisneros had moved back home. On hearing the news, Jones arrived late one night at the Cisneros house. She later recounted, in a sealed deposition, that there was an emotional confrontation, in which Mary Alice told her that she was just one of many mistresses. According to the deposition, Cisneros denied it, and once more declared his love for Jones. He then "did what we say is right," the former Texas governor Ann Richards, a Democrat, told me. "He broke off a relationship, returned to his family, took care of a sick child."

By May of 1991, Jones was clinically depressed, unemployed, and broke. She decided to move back to Lubbock with her adolescent daughter, to be near her mother and her sister. That spring, she told investigators, Cisneros reaffirmed what she called "the agreement"—a verbal commitment to support her until her daughter graduated from college, or until she got a job at her previous level of pay. Jones later maintained that Cisneros promised to pay her four thousand dollars a month. Cisneros has said in a deposition that there was never a specific agreement, but that he did give Jones money regularly when he could, because she needed it and he still cared about her. The next year, Jones underwent a hysterectomy, and told Cisneros in one taped phone conversation that she had suffered a nervous breakdown. She and her lawyers have said that Ativan and Paxil were prescribed for her anxiety and depression. She also made fitful and unsuccessful attempts to find employment. Cisneros continued to send her money; giving someone money is legal, as long as any gift exceeding ten thousand dollars a year is declared to the I.R.S. According to prosecutors, Cisneros did not declare his payments to Jones; not declaring such payments can be a misdemeanor.

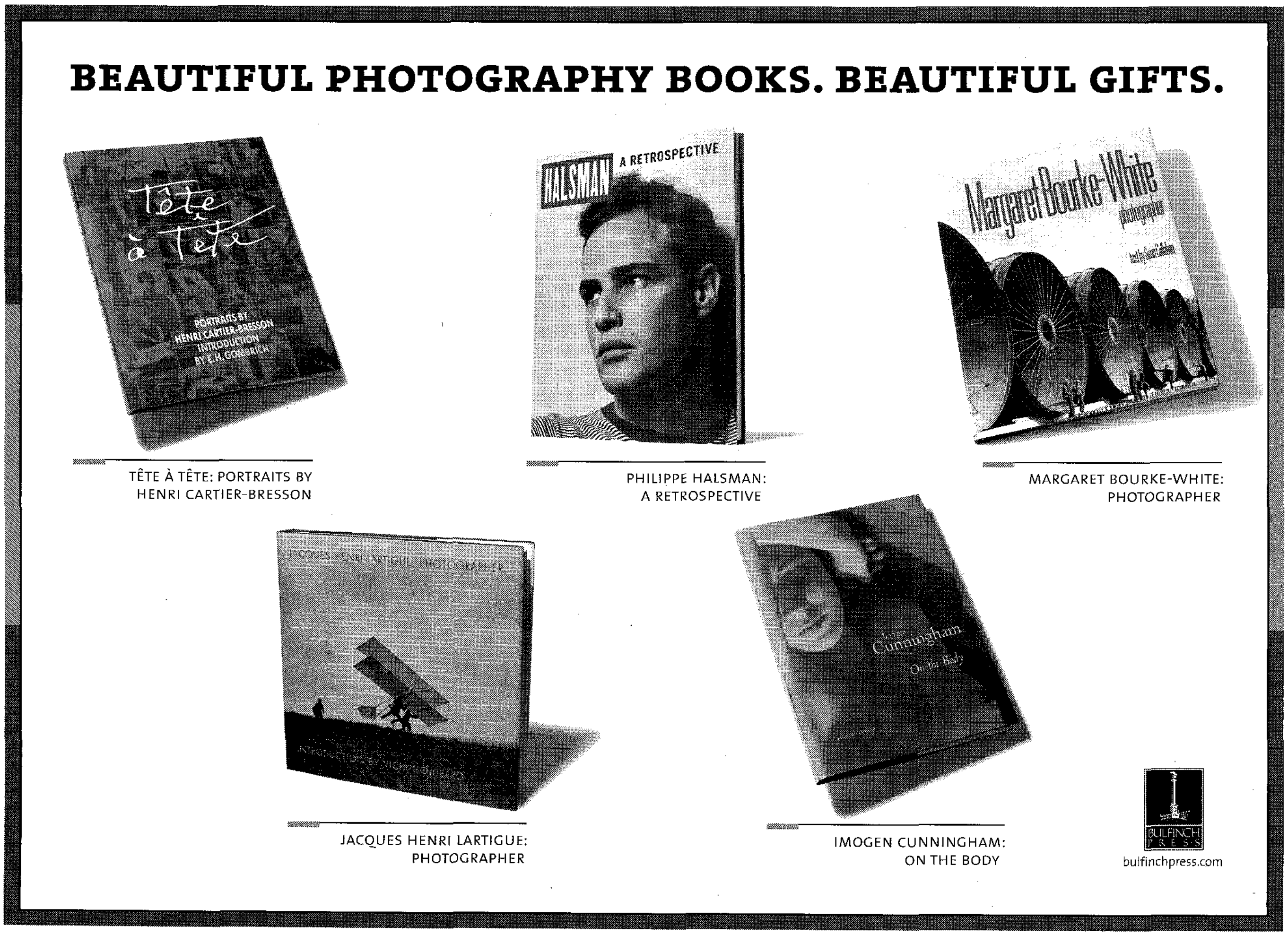
At the time, Cisneros was making a comfortable living in the private sector, managing pension funds and giving speeches. But in 1992, when Clinton was elected President, Cisneros, who had worked on the campaign, could not resist the lure of public life. The tapes of his conversations with Jones make it clear that he yearned for the job of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. "I asked for this because this is where the crap is in America," he told her in one call. "I needed to save my soul." Ambition played a part, too. Cisneros worried that if he didn't get to Washington he might "die on the vine." Jones was afraid that if Cisneros went to Washington, as she said in one call, "I lose you forever."

When Cisneros was being vetted for the H.U.D. post, he told the F.B.I., the Clinton transition team, and key senators that he had made payments to a former mistress. It didn't hold up his confirmation, and he soon became a star of the new Administration—an able and energetic Cabinet officer and a personal favorite of the President. In 1993, in what he later said was an attempt to settle things with Jones, Cisneros sold some assets and paid her more than seventy-five thousand dollars. After that, he stopped sending money. Jones continued to have financial difficulties. She borrowed thousands of dollars from her already hard-pressed sister and mother, but she couldn't keep up the mortgage payments on the small house that Cisneros had helped her buy.

On July 29, 1994, Jones sued Cisneros, charging him with breach of contract. She then sold to the television show "Inside Edition" tapes of phone conversations in which he acknowledged his financial obligations to her. The tapes contained endless haggling about money, as well as intimate chat. But Jones also led Cisneros through numerous potentially incriminating conversations. For example, when he told her, on one tape, that the F.B.I. thought that he had given her at most sixty thousand dollars she pointed out that the figure was far too low. She also tried to get him to admit that he had taken undeclared campaign contributions in cash from a San Antonio businessman named Morris Jaffe—an accusation that he heatedly denied even when he had no idea that he was being taped.

Jones's tapes have not yet been admitted as evidence in any court, and questions have emerged about their integrity. Nonetheless, the conversations indicate that Cisneros misled the F.B.I.—perhaps, his supporters speculate, to hide from his wife or the I.R.S. the true amount of his payments to Jones. According to the indictment against him, Cisneros told F.B.I. investigators that the payments were all in the past, that he had not given Jones more than ten thousand dollars in any one year, and that no single payment had exceeded twenty-five hundred dollars. In fact, prosecutors say, he had given her about a hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars in the previous three years, and he sent four thousand dollars more the week he was interviewed. In all, Cisneros apparently paid Jones close to a quarter of a million dollars. Yet on the tapes he tells her that the F.B.I. agents will not be able to determine the actual figure because they are "just gossipers and scandalizers, like everybody else you know."

When the "Inside Edition" segment was broadcast, there were immediate calls for Attorney General Janet Reno to request the appointment of an independent counsel. The director of the F.B.I., Louis Freeh, also wanted an in-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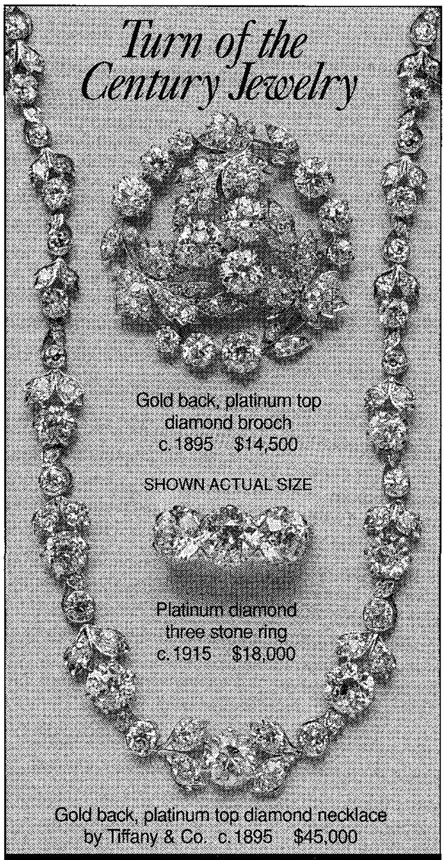

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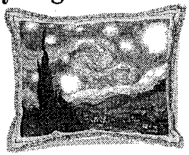

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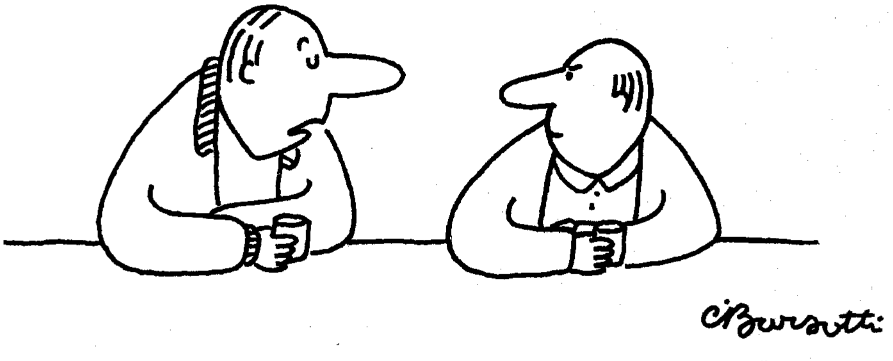
quiry. The F.B.I. takes seriously its responsibility to vet administration appointees and believes that lying under such circumstances can compromise national security. Still, almost no one thought that the investigation would take more than a few months. Cisneros's failure to disclose the full sum he paid to Jones would probably have been dismissed as immaterial to his confirmation, unless it was discovered that there was more to the misrepresentation. One possibility was that Jones had been blackmailing Cisneros for an undisclosed reason, and the quickest way to find out whether the payments were "hush money" was to get Jones to testify against Cisneros. "To have a sexy case," Jones's former lawyer Floyd Holder says, "they needed Linda bad."

Thus, six months after Barrett began the Cisneros investigation, Jones was offered an immunity deal. She had already given investigators the tapes, and now, in exchange for her full and truthful coöperation, she would be protected from prosecution. But Jones's coöperation proved erratic. She missed appointments, then made up excuses, which the prosecutors knew to be false, because they had her under surveillance. "She just lied about things that didn't even matter," Holder says. Jones fired him, he says, soon after he warned her about this behavior. The prosecutors had the F.B.I. test Jones's tapes, and the F.B.I. said they appeared to be duplicates, rather than unedited originals, which greatly undercuts their evidentiary value. Jones denied that the tapes were doctored, claiming that she had merely taped over extraneous conversations, and that there were no other tapes. She also voluntarily took and passed a polygraph. Nine months into the investigation, Jones had still not implicated Cisneros in anything more serious than understating the amount of money he had given her. At that point, Jones, who had waived her attorney-client privilege with Holder and proceeded to deal with the investigators without the benefit of counsel, called her former attorney to complain that the prosecutors kept asking her the same questions, "over and over in a louder and louder voice." Holder recalls her asking, "What do you think they want?" He replied, "I think they want you to give a different answer."

In September of 1996, while Jones was in Washington being interviewed by the prosecutors, F.B.I. agents searched her house in Lubbock, and seized her tape recorder and other items. Shortly afterward, Holder and six members of his staff were subpoenaed by Barrett's office and brought before a Washington grand jury. Jones, who had been a witness for the independent counsel, was now one of his targets. The prosecutors believed that she had lied to them, and revoked her immunity. Even though Cisneros announced, in November, after Clinton won reëlection, that he would leave the Cabinet in the second term, the prosecutors continued to work up charges, using the testimony that Jones had given so far and files from her lawyers. A twenty-six-count indictment against Jones, her sister, and her brother-in-law was handed down by a Lubbock grand jury a year later, in September of 1997.

Jones had told the prosecutors that she purchased a house when she returned to Lubbock, using sixteen thousand dollars provided by Cisneros to cover the down payment. At that time, she had no job and no credit, so her sister and brother-in-law, Patsy and Allen Wooten—a retired truck driver and a former medical secretary, who were both working in their son's lighting



"Oh, like you know something the Internet doesn't know."

business—signed closing documents representing that they were buying the eighty-four-thousand-dollar house as their primary residence. They indicated that they would use their other house as a rental property. In fact, they were buying the second house for Linda.

For two years, Jones managed to keep up the mortgage payments. When she felt that she no longer could, the Wootens sold the house and paid off the mortgage. (Jones went to her mother's.) The buyer of the house moved in three months before the deal was closed, and paid thirty dollars a day in rent. The prosecutors argued that since the Wootens had obtained the mortgage fraudulently, by misleading the bank, the rent was laundered money. According to this theory, each of four small rent checks, including one for ninety dollars, constituted a separate felony.

The deception surrounding the purchase of a trailer-sized house in Lubbock, Texas, may seem, even to some former prosecutors, an odd choice for an independent counsel in Washington to focus on. Indeed, after thoroughly reading the indictment of Jones and the Wootens, Michael Zeldin, a partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, who headed the Justice Department's money-laundering division for two years, said the case struck him as "frightening," and "an absurd abuse of the money-laundering statute." He added, "I have never seen anyone prosecuted for anything like it."

NONETHELESS, a presentencing report found that Jones, then forty-eight, faced up to eighty-seven months in prison if convicted. Jones's sister, who was well known around Lubbock for volunteering many hours as a girls' basketball and softball coach, and Jones's brother-in-law might both face jail time. Vera Jones, Linda's mother, who is eighty-seven, was so shaken by the possibility that both her daughters might go to prison, friends say, that she stopped eating, and had to be given medication for depression. Jones was little help in preparing her own defense, according to one of her lawyers, because at every meeting "she just broke down and bawled." The Wootens' friend Kathy Simmons says, "It's totally destroyed their lives."

David Guinn, who was appointed by the court last fall to defend Jones, handles more than a hundred criminal cases a year. He could barely cope with the flood of what he says were eighty-four thousand pages of documents coming from the independent counsel. "They have teams of lawyers and F.B.I. agents, and they spent three years and seven million dollars on this one case," he asserts. "This was their whole career—they wanted to be in the history books. . . . It's not like any prosecution I've dealt with before or since." Under the circumstances, Guinn says, he couldn't argue with Jones when, the night before her trial, she decided to take the government's plea bargain. He acknowledges that Jones violated the letter of the law, and that she lied about all manner of inconsequential things, such as why she had been late for appointments. But he scoffs at the notion that she was covering up larger crimes by Cisneros. "They're certainly not friends anymore," he says. "If she was trying to protect him, why would she start now?"

In court last January, Jones looked overweight and dishevelled. Her blond hair had gone gray. She pleaded guilty to all twenty-six counts and accepted a three-and-a-half-year jail sentence. Her sister and brother-in-law pleaded guilty to one felony count each, with the understanding that they would be spared prison. When I spoke with them at their home later that day, they still didn't quite believe what had happened. Patsy, who hadn't slept the night before, said, "I don't even know what money laundering is." Her husband, Allen, added, explaining the house purchase, "If you don't help your family members, who will?"

Last year, a month before her plea bargain in Texas, Jones was also indicted in Washington, along with Cisneros and two associates, for conspiring to cover up "hush money." Jones will be tried separately from Cisneros, who is now the head of Univision, the Spanish-language broadcast company. The prosecutors may still want Jones's coöperation as a witness against him. The Wootens have not yet been sentenced, which can only increase the prosecutors' leverage with Jones. Sitting in a prison cell in Carswell, Jones told a relative she hopes that when Congress reconsiders the independent-counsel act the lawmakers will ask her opinion. ♦

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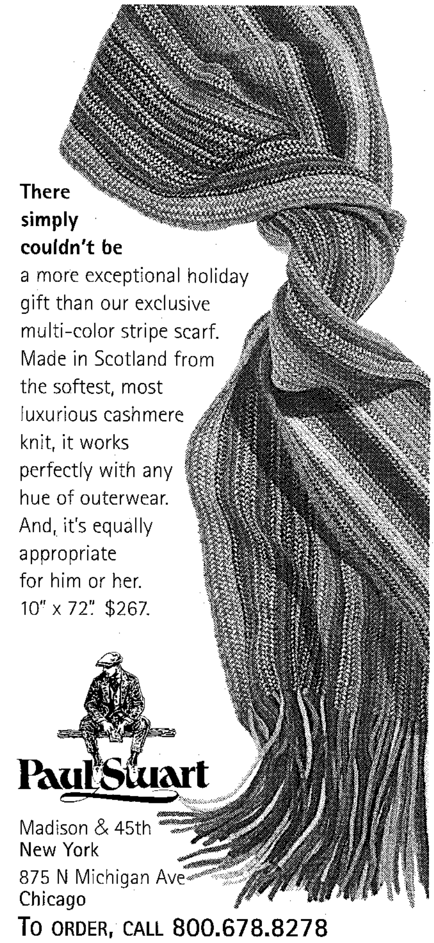
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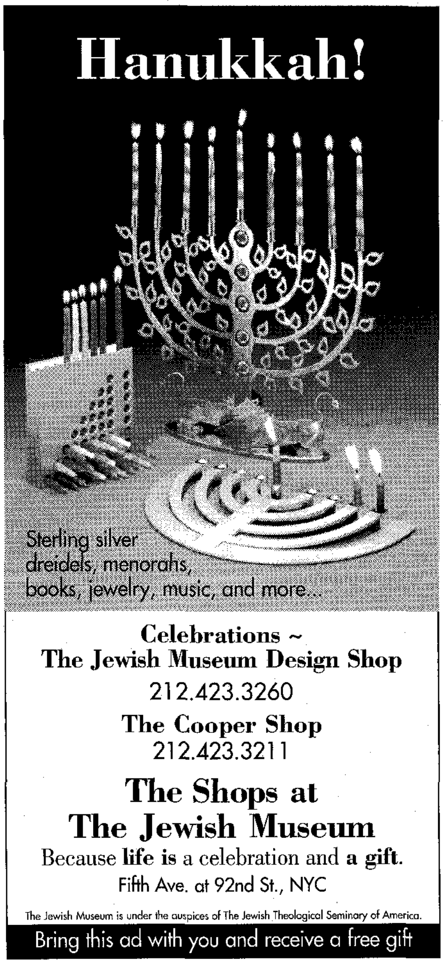
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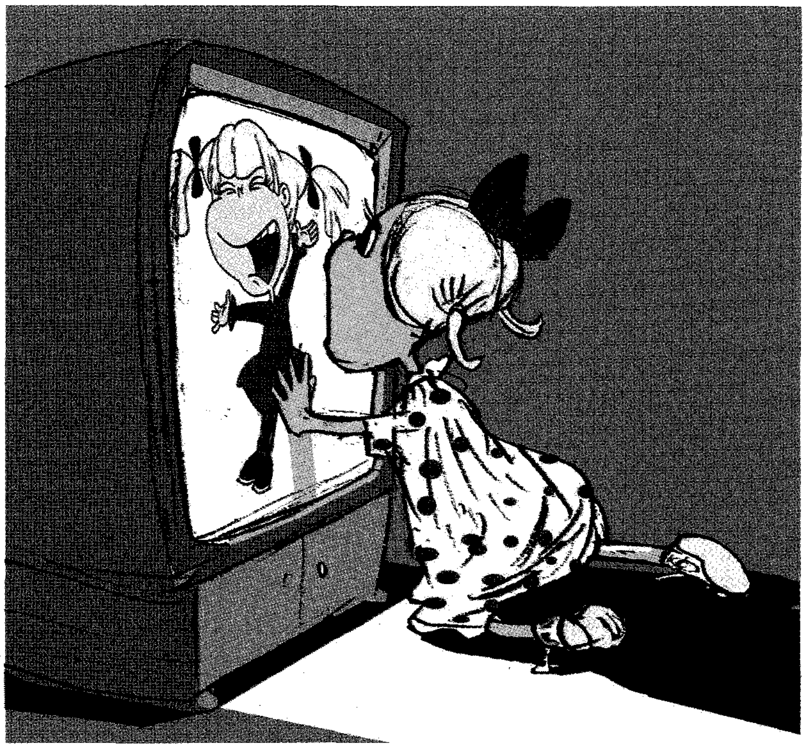
ANNALS OF ANIMATION

YOU DUMB BABIES!

How raising the "Rugrats" children became as difficult as the real thing.

BY MIMI SWARTZ

OVER the past decade, Arlene Klasky and her former husband, Gabor Csupo, have become two of the most highly regarded animators in Hollywood. In the late eighties, they helped create "The Simpsons," a prime-time cartoon show based on Matt Groening's dark, deadpan comics about a modern family, and they went on to originate several successful cartoon series. Nine years ago, with the producer Paul Germain, they developed "Rugrats," which is now the most popular children's television cartoon show in the country. (It has won three Daytime Emmy Awards, and "The Rugrats Movie," a feature film based on the show, just opened.) "Rugrats" stars a group of preternaturally adventurous toddlers: Tommy Pickles, a sweet-natured one-year-old; Chuckie, his two-year-old neurotic friend; and the year-old twins from next door, Phil and Lil. The children are far more precocious than their parents could ever imagine (they talk and conspire as soon as the grownups leave the room) but nevertheless often find themselves at the mercy of Tommy's malevolent three-year-old cousin Angelica, the unreliable emissary between the world of the children and that of adults.



Angelica Pickles: A rotten little girl and a role model for millions.

Klasky, however, did not seem completely sanguine about "Rugrats" when I visited her a few months ago in her austere office at Klasky Csupo, Inc., the animation studio she runs with Csupo. Her wide eyes, generous mouth, and abundant curly hair give her the pleasant, reassuring look of an earth mother, but her manner was guarded and anxious as we spoke. When I asked her about Angelica, she shrank back in her swivel chair. "I think she's a bully," she said. "I never liked Angelica."

This confession is somewhat surprising, since Angelica is one of children's favorite "Rugrats" characters. It

ISTVAN BANYAI

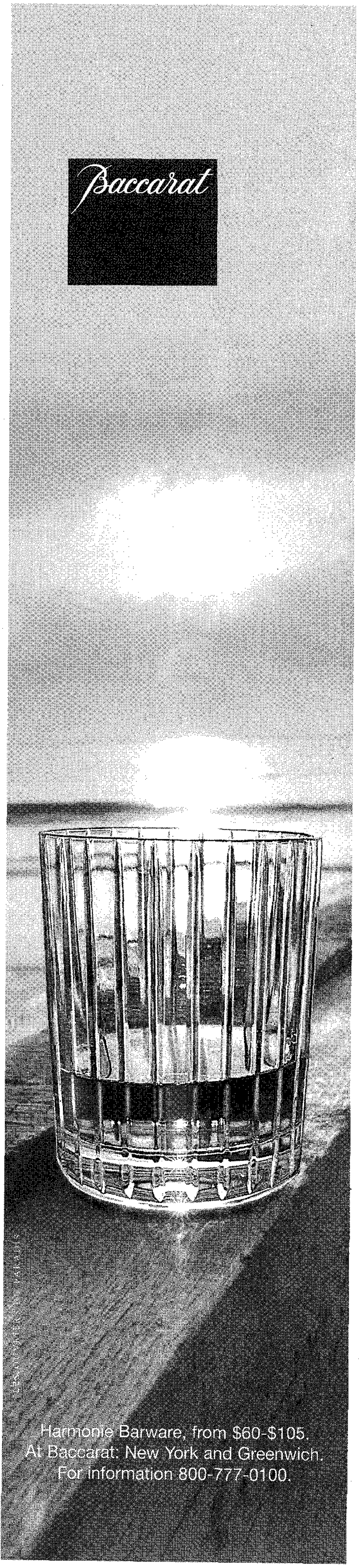
is also largely through her that Klasky Csupo established the edgier, more sophisticated children's-cartoon style that is the studio's trademark. For millions of kids, Angelica is their icon of mischief—a direct descendant of Spanky McFarland, Dennis the Menace, and Eloise. Angelica was invited to promote the movie on "The Rosie O'Donnell Show," and she was given a speaking role in a Ford Motor Company commercial. This month, she was honored by Girls, Inc., a nonprofit educational group formed to inspire young women to be "strong, smart and bold," and her spinoff videos, "Angelica the Divine" and "Angelica Knows Best," are strong sellers. Producers of children's programming regard her as completely bankable—the cartoon equivalent of Julia Roberts. They've been known to exhort writers and animators, "Get me more characters like Angelica!"

But Angelica was a source of dissension at Klasky Csupo. Although the idea of a baby show originated with Klasky, Angelica was not her invention, and Klasky never fully approved of the way Germain and the show's first team of writers developed her character. In the early years of the series, Angelica sued her parents, ran away from home in her baby convertible, framed her friends for crimes that she had committed, and terrorized innocents. (In one episode, she convinced Chuckie that his stomach was going to explode because he had eaten a watermelon seed.) Her trademark line became "You dumb babies!,"and her only real friend was a ratty doll named Cynthia. "She's really nasty to Tommy, Chuckie, and the twins," notes U. C. Knoepflmacher, an authority on children's literature who teaches at Princeton University. "But, on the other hand, her manipulation of her businesswoman mother and her resourcefulness are tremendously attractive."

In a sense, Angelica embodied the approach to children's television pioneered in the late eighties by Geraldine Laybourne, then the president of Nickelodeon (she now has her own multimedia company). Laybourne wanted shows that were smarter and funnier than the standard children's programs, without being offensive or inappropriate for grade-schoolers. So the network recruited writers and animators with a sharper sensibility, and then struggled to contain their darker impulses. It was a risky strategy, and it produced some anxious moments—notably, in the "Ren & Stimpy Show," a manic cartoon series in the Ralph Steadman style about a cat and a chihuahua. Its creator, John Kricfalusi, was an irascible eccentric who was eventually removed from the series because his material was deemed too violent and scatological. With "Rugrats," discord among the staff arose from the show's effort to be both cutting-edge and age-appropriate, and the angriest battles were fought over Angelica. In fact, the conflict over Angelica was in many ways responsible for the breakup of the original "Rugrats" creative team.

I FIRST became aware of Angelica the way most parents do—when I was wandering in and out of the room while my son, then five years old, was watching television. "Rugrats" wasn't like the shows I had watched as a kid. In the world inhabited by the Pickles family and their friends, the children were precocious, and the dialogue was knowing, with sly references to everything from "Our Gang" to Sigmund Freud and sci-fi movies like "Fantastic Voyage." The parents were ambitious, self-absorbed, and addicted to experts and gadgets. The babies had an addled, homely look that made them hipper than their smooth, glossy counterparts on other kids' shows. Tommy was goodhearted and brave, but he looked as though he'd been hit over the head with a blunt instrument. Angelica had tight yellow pigtails, saucer eyes, and a pointy little nose, and she spoke out of one side of her face, in a high, wrenching whine that evoked angry kittens. Chuckie, with his Swifty Lazar glasses and convulsed red hair, was a walking nervous breakdown.

The show projected a jaded view of family life and consumer culture. Aside from a somewhat dyspeptic Grandpa Lou, there was no wise Robert Young figure to offer protection and guidance. In one episode, Tommy's father, the scruffy, hapless inventor Stu Pickles, and his dithering but well-intentioned wife, Didi, took Tommy to a child psychologist. Stu had vehemently resisted seeking help, but once they arrived he talked compulsively to the doctor about



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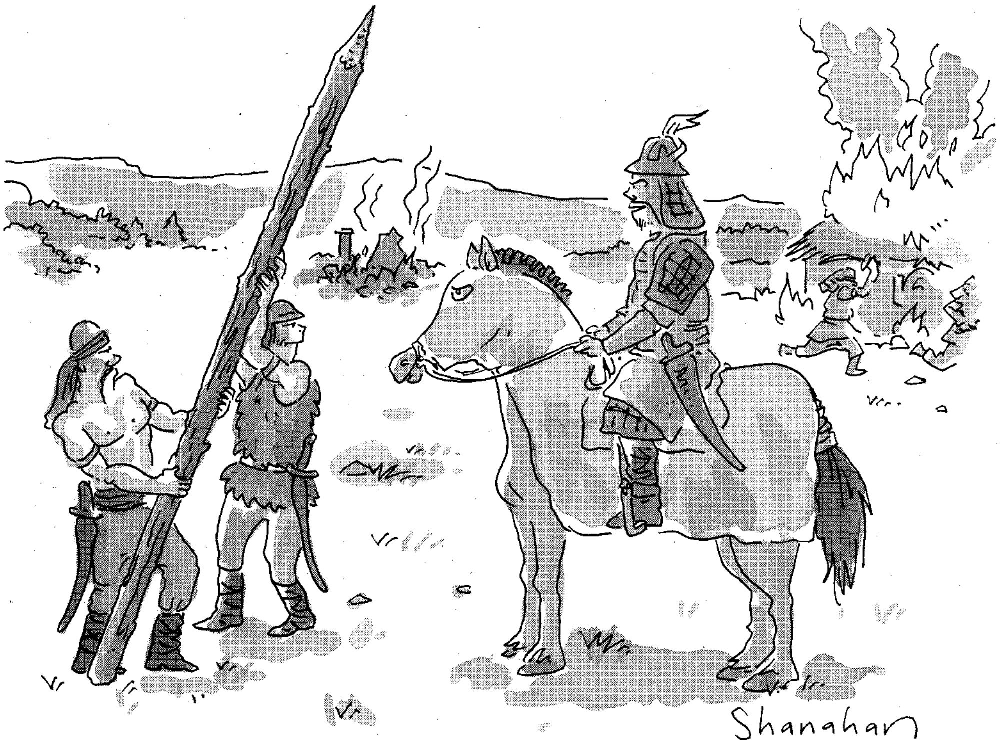

"Excellent—let's run it through legal."

• •

his own psychologically deprived childhood, unaware that Tommy had crawled away to make trouble elsewhere in the high-rise office building. Another show introduced Angelica's parents—Drew, an investment banker, and Charlotte, an executive with Mergecorp who was always pictured in a suit and screaming into the cell phone at her assistant, Jonathan. "Charlotte, something's wrong with the fax machine!" Drew yelled in one scene. "Use the one in the bedroom!" she called from another part of the house.

Particularly in the show's first season, Angelica was mischief unchained, a child as shrewd as she was narcissistic. She was prone to malapropisms and liked to pontificate about the wider world. ("When you're rich, you can pay someone else to be scared for you.") At the end of each episode, Angelica received her obligatory comeuppance, yet she remained unrepentant from show to show. Her nastiness was funny, and, for Klasky at least, that was often a problem.

"Arlene didn't like Angelica," Germain told me. "She never did." When I visited him in his office, at Disney's studios, earlier this fall and asked about the show, he sounded like a man who had lost his kids in a custody battle, and in Hollywood terms he had. Germain is tall, pale, and rather intense, and has a passion for precision. In 1992, when the executives at Nickelodeon suggested a "Rugrats" Hanukkah special, Germain felt compelled to argue that a Passover special was a funny idea, but that a Hanukkah special was not. ("They wanted the Jewish version of a Christmas episode. I told them, 'You know, that's not an interesting story.' ")

Germain is a native of Southern California, and studied economics at Berkeley in the late seventies. Before he was thirty, he was in charge of development for James L. Brooks, who created "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." In the late eighties, Brooks produced the "Tracey Ullman Show," and he hit on the idea of interspersing Ullman's skits with cartoons. Brooks admired the work of the Portland cartoonist Matt Groening, whose strip "Life in Hell" was just taking off with the grunge set, and he asked Germain to find a way to animate it. Germain turned to Klasky and Csupo, who were then still relatively unknown. Klasky had been trained as a graphic designer, and Csupo was a Hungarian émigré whose sensibility had been shaped by everything from Disney's fairy-tale classics to Bergman's films and Frank Zappa's music. Germain took a chance on them: "The Simpsons" became an instant hit. Soon afterward, in 1989, Germain left Brooks to work as a development executive for Klasky Csupo. "We wanted to do intelligent stories for intelligent children," he told me. "I had worked with Jim Brooks, who wasn't gonna do crap, and I wasn't gonna do crap."

Later that year, Nickelodeon asked Klasky Csupo to pitch some ideas for shows. The night before the scheduled meeting with Nickelodeon, Klasky, who was on maternity leave, called Germain with one last suggestion. "What about a show about babies?" she asked. Germain was dubious, but then, he says, he went to bed thinking of a way to make it work. "Finally, it came to me," he recalls. "My pitch would be a show about little babies, but the minute adults leave the room the babies cognate and can talk."

The next day, Germain and Csupo met with Vanessa Coffey, who was then creating an animation department for Nickelodeon. They proposed a show about a boy trying to escape his barren life at a gas station on another planet. Then they suggested one (prescient in retrospect) about life inside a bug city. Coffey wasn't buying. Finally, Germain pitched the idea for a series about babies' lives from the baby's point of view. "Great," Coffey said. "Let's do that one."

Germain, Klasky, and Csupo set out to create the squiggly and near-dissipated characters of Tommy Pickles; his dog, Spike; his parents, Stu and Didi; his Grandpa Lou; and the twins Phil and Lil. Their pilot, "Tommy Pickles and the Great White Thing," played to the insatiable appetite of children for toilet humor and touched on themes that would become "Rugrats" trademarks: exceptionally savvy kids (after his parents tuck him in for the night, Tommy grabs a hidden screwdriver to escape from his crib); oblivious parents (Stu is too busy with a high-powered dinner party to notice that Tommy is on the loose); and knowing references to popular culture (after laying waste the bathroom, Charlie Chaplin-style, Tommy plops down in front of the television and changes the channel from a mindless commercial to a head-banger music video). Nickelodeon loved the pilot, and so did a majority of the kids in the test audience. The network ordered thirteen episodes.

To sustain the series, however, the creators needed more characters. Chuckie was added, as Tommy's cautious sidekick, but, according to Germain, "we decided we needed a bully, because to me childhood is about dealing with bullies." As a kid, Germain had been ruthlessly tormented by a girl. It was decided that the bully should be a spoiled little girl with self-absorbed parents. Her name would be Angelica.

THE special appeal of animation is that there is no limit on mischief. If you can imagine it, you can do it—drop someone off a cliff, mash him into a pancake, twist his arm like a corkscrew. Legendary animators, such as Chuck Jones, at Warner Bros., were masters of such mayhem, which the studios eventually began referring to as "squash and stretch." The fast action was expensive, but that was of little concern during the Depression, when labor was cheap. No one was particularly concerned about content, either, because cartoon characters like Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Sylvester and Tweety were not regarded solely as children's fare. Cartoons ran as previews to movies, and were made to work on several levels.

It wasn't until the institutionalization of Saturday-morning children's television, in the nineteen-sixties, that studios came under pressure to tone down gratuitous violence and "imitable" behavior in cartoons. Kevin S. Sandler, the editor of the lively book "Reading the Rabbit: Explorations in Warner Bros. Animation," explains how, in the nineteen-seventies, television censors persuaded Warner Bros. to cut cartoon scenes in which characters shot guns, drank gasoline or alcohol, made cowboy-and-Indian or other racial jokes, or received electric shocks. The number of times a character could be pounded into the ground had to be reduced from, say, six to two.

The studios were willing to limit the squash and stretch in part because animation had become very costly. Even though much of the production began to be sent overseas, cartoons were so ex-

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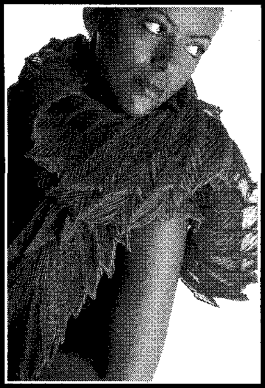

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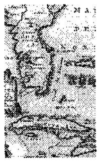

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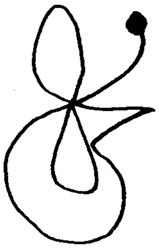
pensive by the nineteen-eighties that animators often had to make a deal with a toymaker before they could create a show. As a result, Saturday morning became a wasteland of gender-segregated tie-in programs, like the refurbished "G.I. Joe" for boys and "My Little Pony and Friends" for girls. There was no incentive to make any changes until 1990, when the F.C.C. required that networks be held accountable for the quality of children's programming or risk losing their licenses.

Meanwhile, animation for adults had become racier. Ralph Bakshi came up with a surprise hit in "Fritz the Cat," in 1972, and sixteen years later Roger Zemeckis directed the sexy, successful "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" In late 1989, "The Simpsons" combined animation and adult humor during prime time, and was followed by the far more cynical "Beavis and Butt-head," in 1993. These shows proved that grownups were perfectly willing to watch cartoons as long as the scripts were knowing. They also demonstrated that children would watch far more complex material than they had been getting on Saturday mornings.

Nickelodeon's goal, in the late eighties, was to find a fresh way of entertaining six- to eleven-year-olds without patronizing or corrupting them. "We wanted to change the face of animation," Vanessa Coffey, who now develops children's programming for King World Productions, says. The company's buzzword was "sophisticated." "When I was growing up, 'Bugs Bunny' was for kids and 'Donna Reed' was for adults," Mitchell Kriegman, a former "Rugrats" story editor for Nickelodeon, says. "Which one was the more sophisticated? 'Bugs Bunny' had classical references; 'Donna Reed' was for morons."



But Nickelodeon knew it had to police content. The network took pains to avoid scenes that could be construed as dangerous to children. "Could we have the babies going down the staircase on a vacuum cleaner? No," Coffey says. "Could we have babies going out the window? No." Nickelodeon also addressed the issue of children's self-esteem—it didn't like characters calling each other "dumb" or "stupid"—and, appropriately for a company run predominantly by women, the issue of gender roles. Some "Rugrats" writers felt they were spending so much time creating confident and employed female characters that the men, devoid of advocates, began to look wimpy and ineffectual.

The aim, explains Craig Bartlett, who was a story editor on "Rugrats," and went on to create Nickelodeon's "Hey Arnold!," was to be surprising and risky enough to get children's attention but safe enough so that "parents could leave it on all day"—unlike, say, "Fox, where kids would see a promo for a murder." In 1991, Nickelodeon launched "Nicktoons," which consisted of three new animated shows: "Doug," a sweet, almost melancholy series about a suburban middle-school student; the "Ren & Stimpy Show"; and "Rugrats."

"We set out to be 'The Simpsons' of kids' shows," Paul Germain says. Germain was not a squash-and-stretch guy; he wanted plot-driven shows with well-developed characters. But, almost immediately, Angelica's incorrigibility became a problem. Cheryl Chase, the voice of Angelica, had trouble being mean enough in line readings. One of the writers, Steve Viksten, who subsequently co-developed "Hey Arnold!" with Craig Bartlett, would try to put her in the right frame of mind, saying, "Look. You're the J. R. Ewing of the show."

During the first season of "Rugrats," in 1991, Klasky responded to Angelica's antics more as an overanxious parent than as a working animator. "With everything that came out, I'd ask, 'How would I feel if my kids were watching that?' " she told me. Many of the show's writers, some of whom also had children of their own, found her caution constricting. " 'Rugrats' didn't take this view of childhood as innocent," one of them told me. In the second episode, the script called for Angelica to throw the babies' ball over a fence, precipitating an expedition to the neighbor's yard. Why, Klasky reportedly asked, did Angelica have to be so mean? In another episode, Viksten thought it would be funny if Angelica lost her temper and screamed, "You dumb babies!" Klasky didn't want the

MY KIND

Memory is a tiny room lit
by a wan lamp. The radio plays
soft static but no one minds.

Father yawns. Mother yawns, too,
but hides it behind a hand. I knew
already I was not their child.

My kind never yawned. Alert, we waited
for our time (and wait still).
I yawn, thinking about it.

—Leonard Nathan

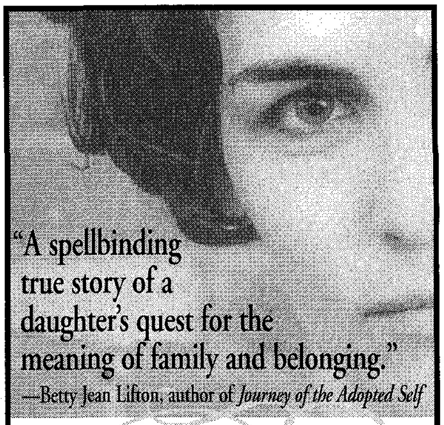
characters gratuitously insulting each other, but the line would eventually make it into a script and become a “Rugrats” signature.

Tensions escalated in a subsequent episode called “The Trial,” which satirized recovered memory. Angelica urged Chuckie to confess that he had broken Tommy’s favorite clown lamp, even though he didn’t remember having done so. “That’s where we established her,” Germain says of Angelica. Klasky later told me, “I felt strongly that we needed a bully, but that we needed to counter how mean-spirited she was.” The writers ended the episode with a Perry Mason moment in which the other Rugrats drew a confession out of Angelica. “I did it and . . . there’s *nothing* you babies can do about it ’cause *you can’t talk*,” she taunts. Unfortunately, Didi overhears, and Angelica gets “the chair,” a.k.a. a timeout. From that point on, Klasky frequently complained that the babies were too grown-up. Many of the writers mimicked the “Rugrats” characters, and Klasky sometimes lapsed into baby talk in voicing what she wanted. “By the end of the first season,” one former staff member says, “she was driving some of us crazy.”

After its first year, “Rugrats” won a Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program. Yet by its second season, in 1992, the show was being run by warring generals. What’s more, Csupo and Klasky’s marriage was collapsing. Both of them, however, continued to work on “Rugrats,” and Csupo often tried to mediate between his wife and the writing staff. Csupo, writers remember, tended to agree with them. “I was always pushing as far as good taste allowed,” he told me.

By then, the show’s growing popularity was inspiring comparisons to “Our Gang,” even though one of the show’s former story editors, Joe Ansolabehere, recalls, “Paul always hated ‘Our Gang.’ To him, the point of ‘Our Gang’ was to give kids lines they would never say, watch them screw it up, and that’s the joke.” The “Rugrats” writers were actually more closely in tune with “Peanuts.” Craig Bartlett explains, “That was a major breakthrough in giving characters a psychology. Up till then it was anvils falling and shit.” He goes on to say, “Charlie Brown was dealing with his depression, Linus was obsessed with his blanket—these were post-Dr. Spock ideas. . . . I thought, Holy cow, there’s a cartoon character that’s bummed out. Bugs Bunny was never bummed out.”

“You know what I’m tired of doing?” Germain asked at the beginning of the “Rugrats” ’ second season. “These ‘wreak havoc’ episodes. They’re never any good.” (The episodes were described to me as “The Rugrats go to an office building and wreak havoc, the Rugrats go to a toy store and wreak havoc, the Rugrats go into a grocery store and wreak havoc.”) Germain wanted to explore emotions: Why was Chuckie so afraid? Why was Angelica such a rotten kid? The writers look back on this as “the Golden Age of ‘Rugrats,’ ” though



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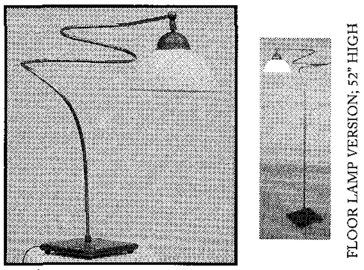

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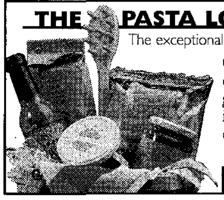

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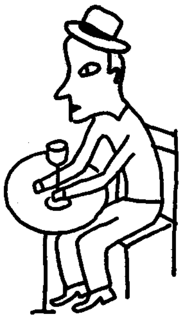
a Nickelodeon story editor at the time sometimes criticized the adult-oriented “Rugrats” scripts as being “too ‘Thirtysomething.’ ” In later shows, the source of Angelica’s brattiness was revealed: viewers met her parents, who were too busy with their careers to raise her properly. In “Runaway Angelica,” she floods her father’s home office with paper from the fax and copy machines, and when she is sent to her room she plots to run away. Hiding out in Tommy’s yard, she shakes down the other Rugrats for cookies, and then spies her father inside next door. She overhears him musing that it is nice to occasionally escape the responsibilities of parenthood. Angelica bursts into the house, sobbing, and apologizes for all her past transgressions. “Take you back?” her father asks. “Honey, I didn’t even know you were gone!”



When her meanness was exposed as neediness, Angelica became, if not nicer, then more complex. “She’s an extremely vulnerable girl,” Coffey assured me. “She’s just hostile and angry.” But her essential unpleasantness remained unchanged. In “Pickles vs. Pickles,” Angelica sued Charlotte and Drew for making her eat broccoli. (“I think I can get your parents kicked out of the house,” her lawyer assured her.) By now, some of the tensions on the show were finding their way into the scripts. For example, the writers parodied Klasky’s passion for child-care experts by making Didi Pickles ever more slavishly dependent on a pompous child psychologist named Dr. Lipschitz.

By 1993, as “Rugrats” neared the première of its third season, the situation reached its predictable Hollywood conclusion: Germain was out (he eventually went to work for Disney, where he developed the highly rated Saturday-morning cartoon series “Recess” for ABC), and the members of his writing team who hadn’t already left the show did so in his wake. (The “Rugrats” creators are now prohibited by a legal settlement from discussing their split.) Despite winning a second Emmy, “Rugrats” appeared to have run its course, and in 1994, Nickelodeon ordered no new episodes. Still, Germain had left one extremely valuable asset behind: there were sixty-five episodes, the number required to send a show into syndication at Nickelodeon.

The year that “Rugrats” ceased production was also the year that it became a hit. Nickelodeon’s president, Herb Scannell, who is a programming wizard, decided to broadcast the show every evening around dinnertime, and, as any parent can tell you, small children delight in repetition. Almost overnight, “Rugrats” became one of the most popular programs on cable, with twenty-three million viewers a week. Advertising and licensing deals took off, and in 1996, after two years of steady reruns, the show went back into production. Klasky and Csupo were repeatedly described in the press as creative geniuses, and their consistent failure to fully credit Germain compelled eight former “Rugrats” writers to sign a letter of protest to the Los Angeles *Times.*

TODAY, Klasky Csupo’s animation studio takes up almost half a city block. Two battleship-gray buildings are decorated with cartoon characters from their shows, including their latest Nickelodeon hit, “The Wild Thornberrys.” Csupo’s office displays “Rugrats”’ three Daytime Emmy Awards, and a foot-high stack of issues of *Variety* with Klasky and Csupo on the cover; Burger King Kids Club Meal Rugrats toys share a shelf with boxes of Kraft’s Rugrats macaroni and cheese. Csupo, a smallish, laconic man with a Mephistophelian beard, is more philosophical than his ex-wife is about the break with Germain. “It happens in every single production,” he says, of the personality conflicts.

When “Rugrats” resumed, Klasky Csupo hired the writing partners J. David Stem and David N. Weiss, whose previous experience included CBS’s “Cybill” and Nickelodeon’s “Roundhouse,” as well as a final polish on “Anastasia.” They then hired the husband-and-wife team of Jon Cooksey and Ali Marie Matheson, whose “strong suit,” according to a Klasky Csupo book about the making of “The Rugrats Movie,” is “heartfelt moments.” The new episodes of “Rugrats,” which began airing last year, have some daring

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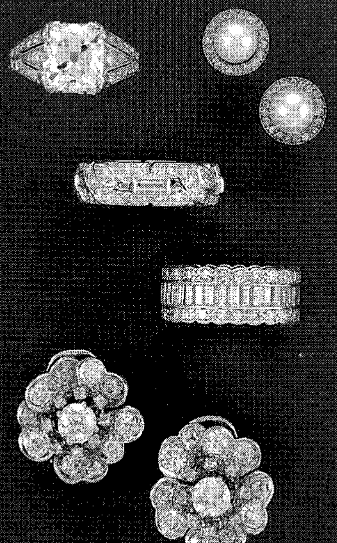

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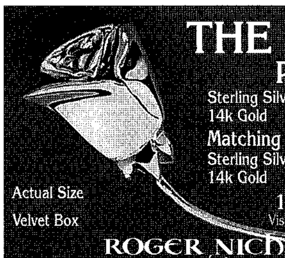

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turns, but the edge has been softened with sentimentality.

The new team claims to love Angelica just as much as Germain did, but it seems to be a tough love. "She's actually my favorite," the story editor Kate Boutilier says. "I try to monitor how many times she says 'You dumb babies!' because it makes her look cruel, and she isn't cruel." (Boutilier also watches Angelica's weight. "I always count how many times she's motivated by food," she says.) "Some people around here felt you can't soften Angelica, but I just think it lends a whole new element," Boutilier explains.

In 1996, when Klasky Csupo got approval from Sherry Lansing, at Paramount, to develop a "Rugrats" feature film, the new team worked up a standard adventure tale that owes a great debt to Disney. The color is lush, there are dramatic, cliff-hanging moments, and it has a hip soundtrack, featuring artists like Jakob Dylan, of the Wallflowers. The sly jabs at yuppie values have mostly been replaced by pee and circumcision jokes, one of which struck my son as so funny that he almost had to be resuscitated.

Angelica is, once again, the catalyst. Fed up with the babies' squalling and fighting over Tommy's new baby brother, Dil, she sends them careering out of the house in the Reptar Wagon, one of Stu Pickles's strange inventions. But then, while the other Rugrats are having adventures in the woods, Angelica simply brings up the rear, tracking the babies because she believes that they've kidnapped Cynthia, her beloved doll. Her only big scenes would have been considered out of character a few years ago: she now bravely steps between the babies and a hungry wolf, and then weeps when she believes that the wolf has mortally injured Tommy's dog, Spike. Children who once thrilled to Angelica's nasty schemes may be disappointed by her role. But Klasky is delighted. "I think she's great for the show," she told me. "I love Angelica." ♦

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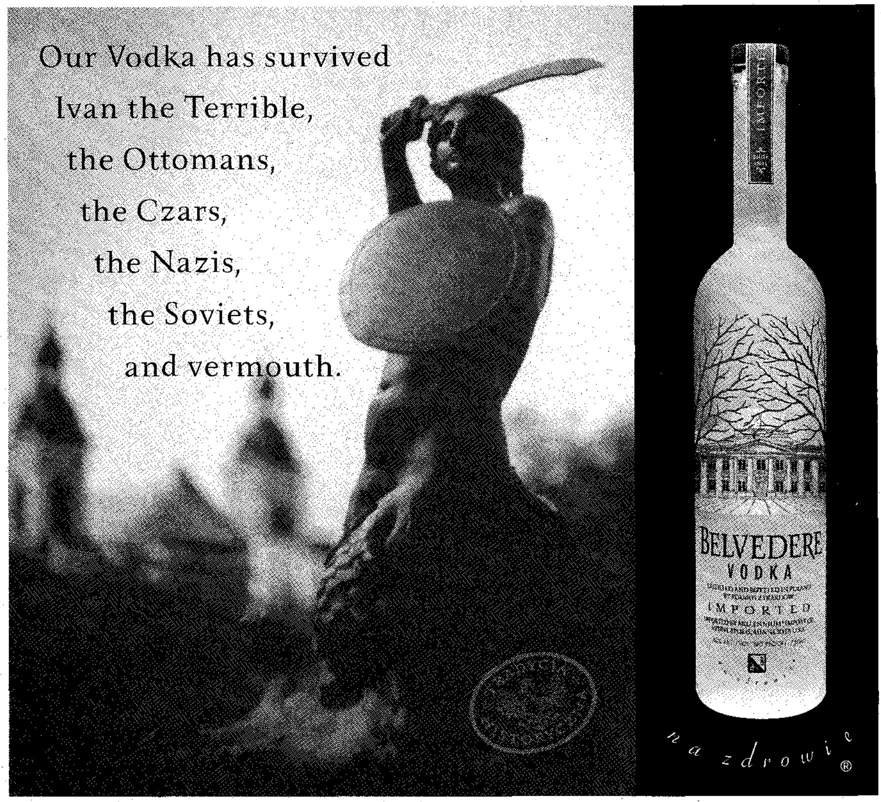

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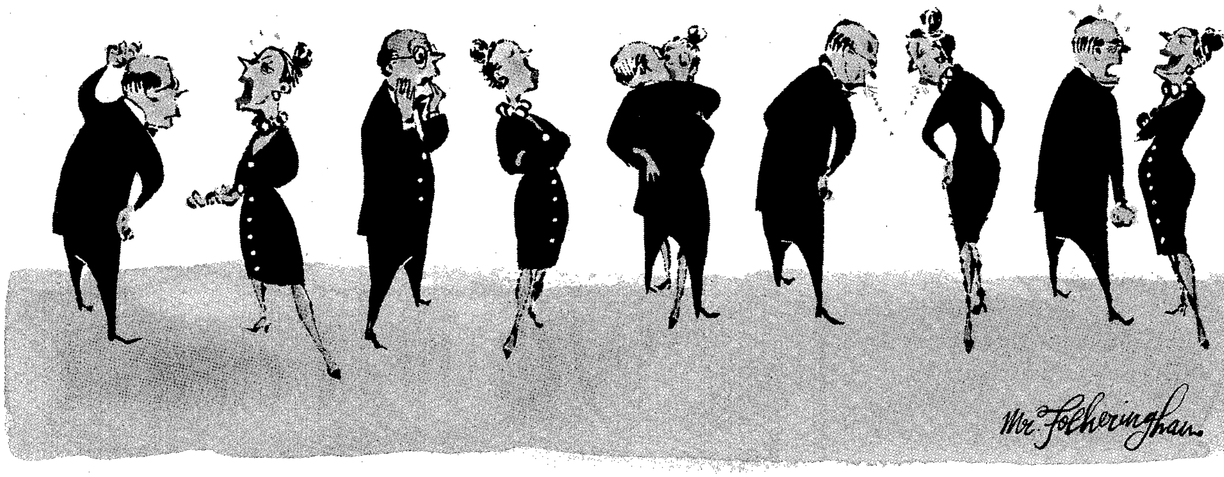
Mary (*trying to appear casual*)



John (*carefully examining the front of her dress*)

Mary (*writhing—thinking*)

John (*He stares at it with a strange, stupid dread.*)

Mary (*She sees he has guessed her secret and at first she quails and shrinks away, then stiffens regally and returns his gaze unflinchingly.*)

John (*He stares at her, stunned and stupid.*)

Mary (*with a low tender cry as if she were awakening to maternity*)

John (*nodding his head several times—stupidly*)

Mary (*stung but pretending indifference—with a wink*)

John (*His face grows livid in spite of the sunburn.*)

Mary (*She seems to be aware of something in the room which none of the others can see—perhaps the personification of the ironic life force that has crushed her.*)

John (*frothing at the mouth with rage*)

Mary (*unruffledly—obsessed*)

John (*He makes a motion across his neck with his forefinger.*)

Mary (*with a moaning sound*)

John (*He presses his lips tightly together—an effort to appear implacable that gives his face the expression of a balky animal's.*)

Mary (*looking at him queerly*)

John (*He whirls defensively with a snarling, murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth, his small eyes gleaming ferociously.*)

Mary (*She raps him smartly, but lightly, on his bald spot with the end of her broom handle.*)

John (*pounding his temples with his fists—tortured*)

Mary (*Their physical attraction becomes a palpable force quivering in the hot air.*)

John (*He hides his face in his hands and weeps like a fat child in a fit of temper.*)

Mary (*more and more obsessed by a feeling of guilt, of being a condemned sinner alone in the threatening night*)

John (*He begins to sob, and the horrible part of his weeping is that it appears sober, not the maudlin tears of drunkenness.*)

Mary (*with a return to her natural tone—but hysterical*)

John (*spitting disgustedly*)

Mary (*spits also*)

John (*He spits leisurely.*)

Mary (*spitting calmly*)

John (*A terrible look of murder comes on his face.*)

Mary (*She takes his head and presses it to her breast and begins to weep. Weeping.*)

John (*In a frenzy of self-abnegation, as he says the last words he beats his head on the flagstones.*)

Mary (*As for her, during his speech she has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless.*)

John (*He begins to laugh, softly at first—a laugh so full of a complete acceptance of life, a profound assertion of joy in living, so devoid of all self-consciousness or fear, that it is like a great bird song triumphant in depths of sky, proud and powerful, infectious with love, casting on the listener an enthralling spell.*)

Mary (*They both chuckle with real, if alcoholic, affection.*)

John (*His voice is heard in a gentle, expiring sigh of compassion, followed by a faint dying note of laughter that rises and is lost in the sky like the flight of his soul back into the womb of Infinity.*)

Mary (*In the midst of this, these two incongruous, artificial figures, inert and disharmonious, the elder like a gray lump of dough touched up with rouge, the younger looking as if the vitality of her stock had been sapped before she was conceived, so that she is the expression not of its life energy but merely of the artificialities that energy had won for itself in the spending.*)

John (*He gulps and his lips twitch.*)

Mary (*more and more strongly and assertively, until at the end she is a wife and mother*)

John (*He falls forward on his face, twitches, is still.*)

Mary (*with a strange cruel smile of gloating over the years of self-torture*)

John (*He dies, laughing up at the sky.*)

Mary (*Her face is again that of a vindictive maniac.*) ♦

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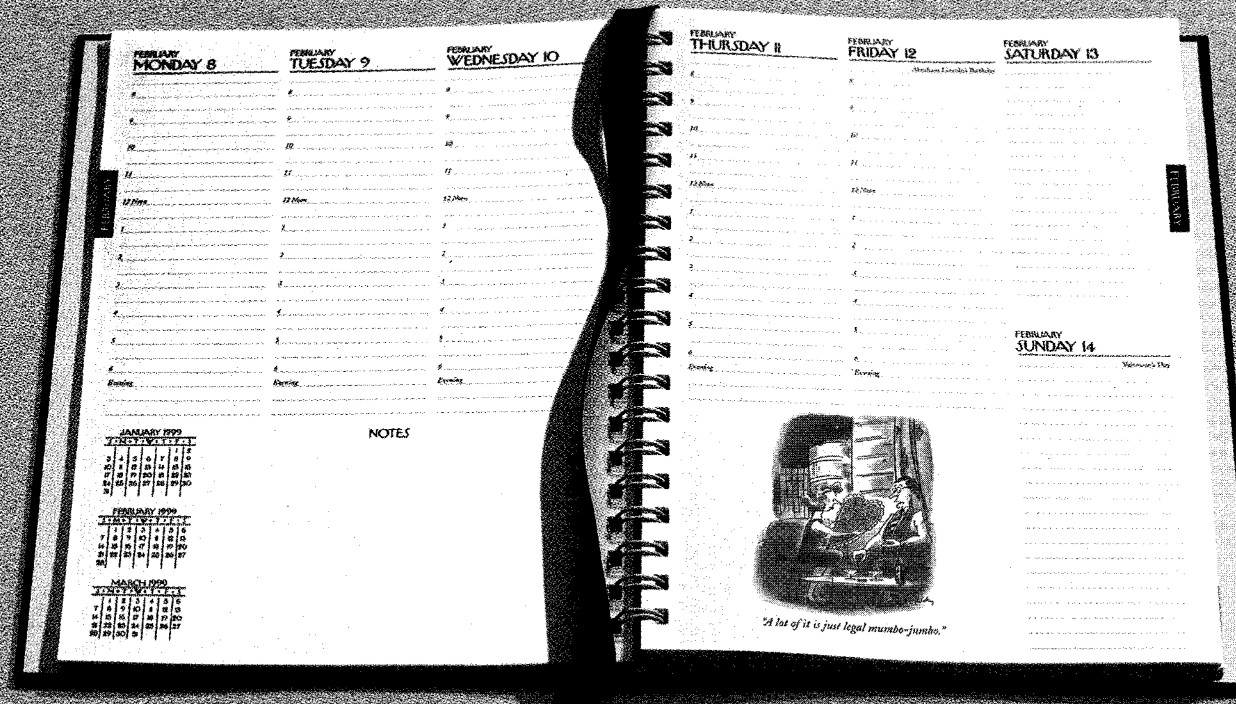
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PROFILE

HEIGHT OF ELOQUENCE

Many modern economists think the profession has left John Kenneth Galbraith behind. They should read his books.

BY JOHN CASSIDY

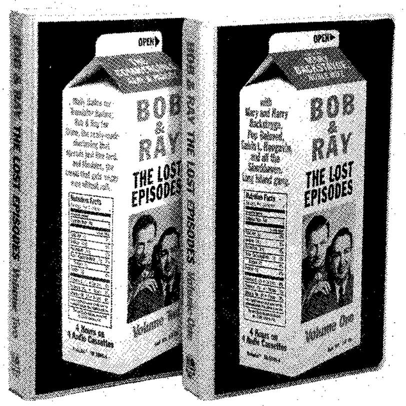
A FEW weeks ago, on a blustery New England evening, a crowd of three hundred or so gathered in a heated tent outside Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Beneath the canvas, surrounded by family members, friends, and former colleagues, a curiously elongated man, his great age belied by a pair of bright hazel eyes and a shock of thick hair cropped above the ears in the style of a Second World War flier, towered above the crowd. John Kenneth Galbraith, probably the second most famous Harvard professor of this century (after Henry Kissinger), was celebrating his ninetieth birthday.

"Everyone in America looks up to Ken, and not just because he is six feet fourteen inches tall," Ted Kennedy told the assembled celebrants. Kennedy recalled how Galbraith was "a close friend of Jack's" and described him as a "true Renaissance man." Kennedy may have exaggerated Galbraith's height—he is six feet eight and a half inches—but he set the tone for the evening's speakers. He was followed by, among others, his nephew John F. Kennedy, Jr. (who recalled that his mother once told him to read the King James Bible and "anything by Ken Galbraith"), Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Gloria Steinem, William F. Buckley, Jr. (who referred to Galbraith as an "emaciated Menshevik"), Katharine Graham, the British politician Roy Jenkins, and, via videotape, Al Gore and Bill Clinton. When Galbraith himself finally rose to speak, he did so slowly and graciously. "Great age is not uniformly a benign experience," he said. "However, I am fully persuaded that it is much better than the alternative." He went on to describe how he had been at Harvard, off and on, for sixty-four years, adding, "Some quite possibly favored the off rather more than the on," and then poked fun at Buckley, praised George McGovern, who was also in the audience, and ended by expressing his profoundest hope that, *pace* Monica Lewinsky, the Kennedy School would never be reduced to giving courses on sex.

What other American intellectual—let alone one who was a professional economist—could have inspired such an evening? The term "Renaissance man" is applied to plenty of people, especially in the throes of the Festschrift or banquet, but Galbraith actually comes close to matching the description. During the nine decades in which he has regarded the world with his quizzical stare (it is fair to assume that even as a child Galbraith was somewhat imperious), he has been, successively, a farm boy, an immigrant, an academic, a Washington bureaucrat, a journalist, a military-intelligence officer, a social critic, a political-campaign worker, a diplomat, a novelist, an art critic, a bon vivant, a leader of the antiwar movement, and an elder statesman. True, he never made it to Stockholm for a Nobel (as some thought he might), but at one time or other he has ended up virtually everywhere else.

It is as a writer that Galbraith will be primarily remembered. To mark his recent birthday, Houghton Mifflin has just republished his most famous work, "The Affluent Society," which first appeared forty years ago and has been a staple of college courses ever since. The book turned Galbraith into one of the most illustrious of American economists, which is strange, since he has always been at odds with his profession. In an introduction to the new edition of "The Affluent Society" he notes that "sadly, economic writing and teaching instill attitudes and beliefs that resist accommodation to a changing world."

Even today, Galbraith remains a great deal more popular with non-economists than with his peers: many contemporary economics texts don't mention his name, and there is no Galbraith



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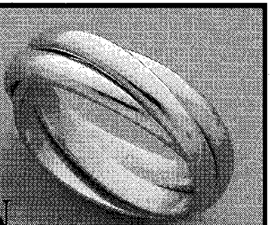

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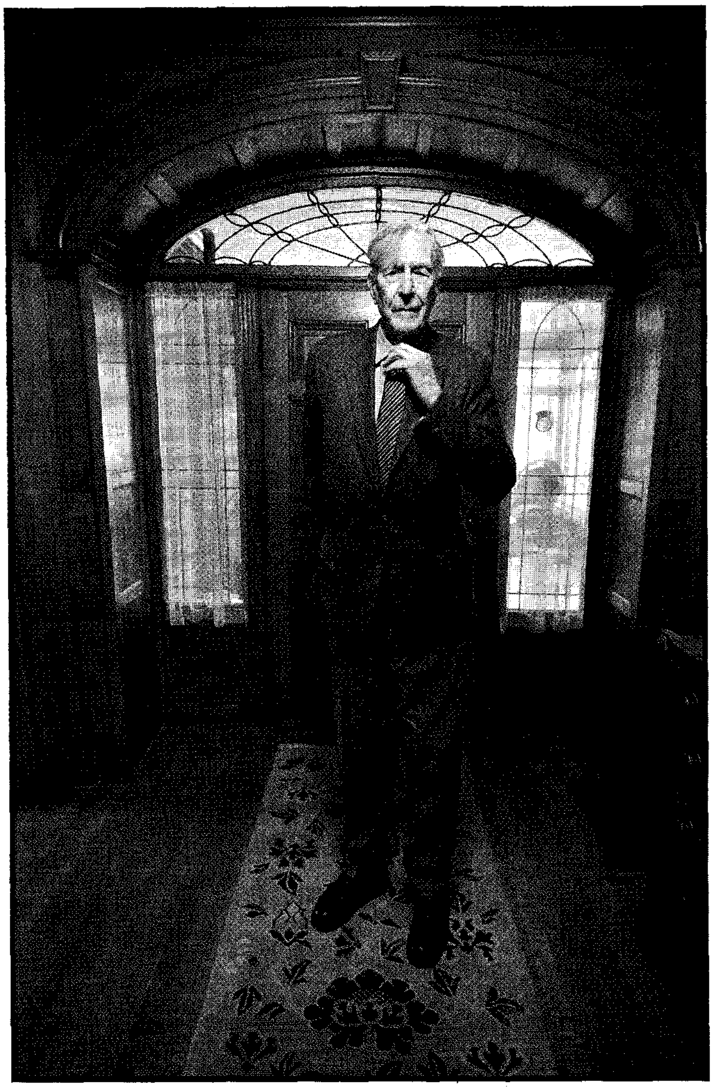
"school" to maintain his intellectual legacy. One leading young economic theorist refused to give me his opinion of Galbraith. "I don't want to be quoted, because I don't have anything to say that is complimentary," he said. Even some of those economists who personally like Galbraith dismiss him with the usual tags—"popularizer," "gadfly," or, worst of all, "journalist." Galbraith's fluency as a writer—at the last count, he had published forty-two books—adds to his colleagues' suspicions. He is the only economist ever to have chaired the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a body seen as dangerously woolly by many of his colleagues.



Galbraith in his Cambridge home: At ninety, he is still asking relevant and penetrating questions. Photograph by Elliott Erwitt.

MAGNUM

Galbraith's neglect by modern economists is unfortunate. Much of what he wrote—about inequality, about the environment, about public spending—is still worth reading. He got a number of things wrong, especially in the late sixties and the early seventies, when he became convinced that corporate bureaucrats were taking over the world. But he got a lot right, too, and his criticisms of postwar American society were hugely influential. After "The Affluent Society," nobody could seriously maintain that unfettered capitalism would educate the poor, tend the sick, keep the air fit to breathe, and leave the populace morally and intellectually fulfilled. His assaults on the ideology of the free market helped lay the foundations for the sixties counterculture, the Great Society programs, the environmental movement, and the women's movement.

From a methodological perspective, Galbraith's critique of mainstream economics has become increasingly pertinent with the passage of time. In recent years, the profession of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill has largely turned into a branch of applied mathematics, with technical virtuosity as its primary goal. The social and political dimensions of the subject, which Galbraith has always stressed, have been sorely neglected, and economics departments are having trouble attracting graduate students. In an era when even many economists see their discipline as increasingly arid and obscure, Galbraith's successors can hardly afford to write off one of the few figures in their midst who have managed to make the subject vital to noneconomists.

THE morning after Galbraith's birthday party, I visited him at his rambling house on Francis Avenue, a few hundred steps from Harvard Yard. Kitty, his wife of almost sixty-two years, led us into his study, and Galbraith arranged himself behind a wooden desk. His hearing is weakening, but, all told, he seemed to be in rude health. Clearly, he had thoroughly enjoyed the previous evening. "I had to think over a couple of times whether I was that good or not, but you would be surprised at how easily I persuaded myself," he said, with a smile. Galbraith appeared to be philosophical about his relations with other economists. "Well, I've been president of the American Economic Association, which is the highest tribute they can give, so I haven't been totally unsuccessful," he said. "However, I'm regarded by one branch of the profession as writing for too large an audience, which means I have departed from the scholarly level of discourse."

Galbraith's ancestors came from the Scottish Highlands. He was born on a hundred-and-fifty-acre farm in Elgin County, southern Ontario, and inherited his height, his politics, and his eloquence from his father, who was a prominent figure in the local branch of the Canadian Liberal Party. ("We were obliged because of our enormous size to alter the world to our specifications," Galbraith senior informed his son.) After attending Ontario Agricultural College, Galbraith went to Berkeley, where he specialized in agricultural economics and wrote a Ph.D. thesis that he later described as "without distinction." In the summer of 1934, he moved to Washington and worked for one of Roosevelt's New Deal farm programs, and later that year he became an instructor at Harvard.

The central question confronting economists in the thirties was, of course, the Great Depression. Galbraith initially believed that major corporations were causing the slump, by keeping their prices high and restricting their output. Just after he had completed a book along these lines, called "Modern Competition and Business Policy," he read "The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money," by John Maynard Keynes. Keynes blamed the Depression on a lack of over-all demand in the

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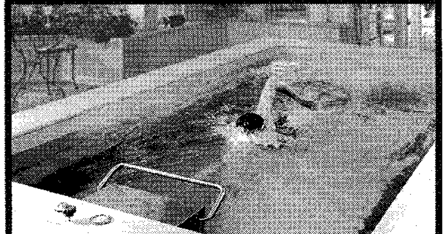

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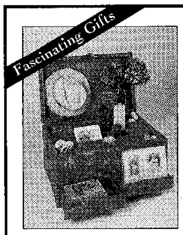

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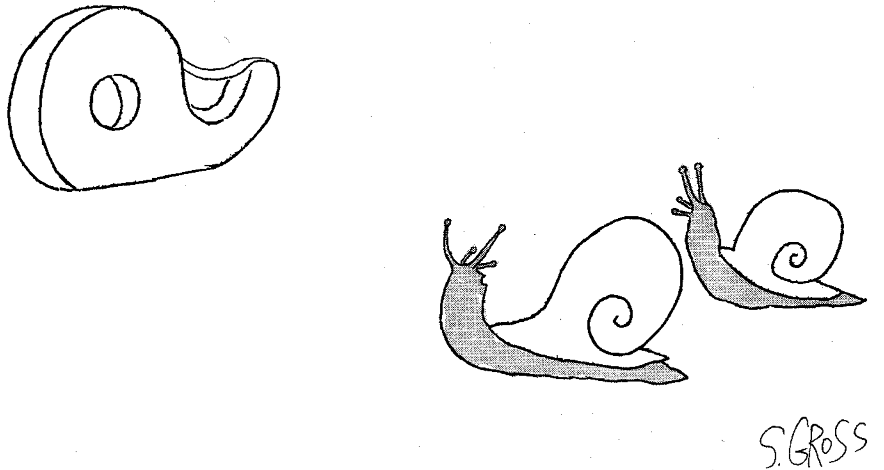
economy, not on the conditions of supply, as Galbraith had suggested. "I found that what I had said was quite orthodox and quite wrong, but meanwhile the book had gone to press," Galbraith told me. (In later years, he dropped "Modern Competition and Business Policy" from his list of publications.) From then on, Galbraith was a devout Keynesian.

In 1939, having failed to secure a tenured position at Harvard, Galbraith left for Princeton, but he found the atmosphere there self-satisfied and anti-intellectual. After Paris fell to the Germans, he returned to Washington and went to work for the National Defense Advisory Commission, a group set up to prepare the American economy for possible conflict. In April, 1941, his mentor, Leon Henderson, a noted New Deal figure who headed the Office of Price Administration, placed Galbraith in charge of price controls for the entire United States. He had become, at thirty-two, a wartime economic czar—an eminence he revelled in. "I started with a staff of seven and ended with thousands," he recalled. "You could lower prices without my permission anywhere in the country, but you couldn't raise them." Not surprisingly, he and Henderson were unpopular with the major corporations whose opportunities for profiteering were restricted. Business interests campaigned strongly to have Henderson and Galbraith's power reduced, and after the Democrats lost seats in the November, 1942, midterm elections both men were forced out.

Galbraith's early years in a struggling farming community and his experience as a wartime commissar set him apart from the majority of American economists. The free-market tradition, which dominated the profession then, as it does now, regarded trade unions, government controls, and firms with monopoly power as "imperfections" that retarded market efficiency. Galbraith had seen too many farmers ruined by unrestrained competition, and he had helped to show what government direction and price controls, combined with new technology and mass production, could do for a country. To him, the message was clear: between 1940 and 1944, the American economy was transformed; industrial output more than doubled, unemployment virtually disappeared, and inflation remained low—quite a turnaround from the thirties, a decade in which unemployment only once dropped below ten per cent.

For the next five years, Galbraith divided his time between the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, where he oversaw a sprawling team of economists and intelligence analysts, and *Fortune*, where he wrote about economics and came to admire Henry Luce. The two men had sharply differing political views, but they shared a liking for lively prose. "It had also been Harry Luce's reluctant discovery that, with rare exceptions, good writers on business were either liberals or socialists," Galbraith recalled in "A Life in Our Times," his 1981 autobiography. "To this he was reconciled. Better someone with questionable ideas who wrote interesting and readable English than a man of sound view who could not be read at all."

IN 1948, Galbraith returned to Harvard. He wrote up his wartime experiences in "A Theory of Price Control," an academic critique of the free market which the free market decisively



"I don't care if she is a tape dispenser. I love her."

rejected; it sold dismally. "The experience persuaded me that one could spend one's life producing professionally well-regarded books that would go extensively unread," he later wrote. "I decided that henceforth I would submit myself to a wider audience, a decision that, in contrast with some others, I have not regretted." In 1952, Galbraith published the first of four major economic books, "American Capitalism." This was followed, in 1958, by "The Affluent Society"; in 1967, by "The New Industrial State"; and, in 1973, by "Economics and the Public Purpose."

Most people grow more conservative as they age; Galbraith took the opposite route, and his writing reflected his political drift to the left. "American Capitalism" was a generally optimistic book; its main principle was the notion of "countervailing power." With the rise of trade unions, coöperatives, and major retail stores, Galbraith argued, American workers and consumers had acquired enough bargaining power to prevent themselves from being exploited by rapacious corporations. Consequently, there wasn't much need for government intervention. "It is countervailing power which, in the typical modern market, regulates the power of private decision," he wrote. (Even Galbraith later conceded that this was an overly optimistic formulation.)

"The Affluent Society," written mainly at the Swiss ski resort of Gstaad in the summer of 1956, is a much darker work. Galbraith set out to puncture the ideological consensus of the Eisenhower years, which he described as "the bland leading the bland." The book became a best-seller, and it was reprinted around the globe. (Galbraith told me that it "not only described the affluent world but also provided me with an entry.") The basic idea here was that capitalism, left to its own devices, doesn't work properly: it excludes the poor, ruins the environment, and fails to deliver enough collectively produced goods, such as roads, reservoirs, schools, and hospitals. Galbraith was the first economist to explain the issue in language accessible to the layman, and to set it in a political context.

He began by coining the term "conventional wisdom," which he defined as "the ideas which are esteemed at any time for their acceptability." A particularly damaging piece of conventional wisdom was the belief that if something is produced by the private sector it must be good but if it is produced by the government it must be bad. "Vacuum cleaners to ensure clean houses are praiseworthy and essential in our standard of living," Galbraith wrote. "Street cleaners to ensure clean streets are an unfortunate expense. Partly as a result, our houses are generally clean and our streets generally filthy." To describe this phenomenon, he coined another pithy phrase, "private opulence and public squalor."

Anyone who has walked around an American city can see that "public squalor" remains a serious problem. Even orthodox economists can see it, and some praise Galbraith's acuity in drawing attention to it. "'The Affluent Society' is a fundamentally important book, and I am glad it is being reissued," Robert Solow, a Nobel laureate from M.I.T who has criticized some of Galbraith's books, told me. "For somebody to keep pounding on people and saying, 'This is damn foolishness—it cannot be that the forty-ninth variety of bagel is more important than your schools or your bridges, and you ought to ask yourselves why you act as if it were,' is, I think, a public service that needs repeating in every generation."

Galbraith didn't merely identify the problem. He tried to explain it, and here he went well beyond orthodox economics, into what is really an altogether different discipline—moral aesthetics. "Advertising operates exclusively, and emulation mainly, on behalf of privately produced goods and services," he wrote. "The engines of mass communication, in their highest state of development, assail the eyes and ears of the community on behalf of more beverages but not of more schools." This argument contradicted a fundamental tenet of the mainstream: consumer sovereignty. In textbook economics, firms merely supply what people want. In Galbraith's world, by contrast, the power lies with the producers, who are usually major corporations with big marketing budgets. Consumers are rubes, gullible folk who can be sold tacky, pointless products that clog the air, ruin the landscape, and corrupt the mind. In one famous passage he wrote:

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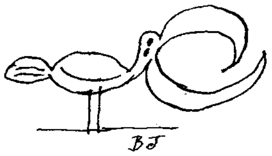
> power-braked automobile out for a tour passes through cities that are badly paved, made hideous by litter, blighted buildings, billboards and posts for wires that should long since have been put underground.
>
> They pass on into a countryside that has been rendered largely invisible by commercial art. (The goods which the latter advertise have an absolute priority in our value system. Such aesthetic considerations as a view of the countryside accordingly come second. On such matters, we are consistent.) They picnic on exquisitely packaged food from a portable icebox by a polluted stream and go on to spend the night at a park which is a menace to public health and morals. Just before dozing off on an air mattress, beneath a nylon tent, amid the stench of decaying refuse, they may reflect vaguely on the curious unevenness of their blessings. Is this, indeed, the American genius?

Galbraith's disgust with the modern world combines puritanism, aestheticism, and anti-materialism. Some economists would agree with him, but most would argue that he raises issues that are beyond the purview of their profession. Galbraith never recognized such a boundary. The passage above anticipates everything from Charles Reich's "The Greening of America" to E. F. Schumacher's "Small Is Beautiful." In Galbraith's tirade can be found early hints of the hippie phenomenon, the consumer movement, and the green explosion. He looked forward to a world in which "production is no longer urgent" and we can "view an increase in voluntary idleness with some equanimity." A decade or so after he wrote those words, many of his young readers decided that such a world had already arrived: they "dropped out" of the capitalist system, at least for a while, only to return later on as ponytailed entrepreneurs and "life style" corporate consultants.



ABOUT eighteen months ago, Galbraith had a bad fall and cracked his hip. He was in the hospital for two months, and his family feared that he might never get out of bed again. Gradually, though, he relearned to stand and walk. These days, he putters around the neighborhood, following his doctor's orders to avoid slippery surfaces. He has just finished yet another book—a remembrance of the political figures he has engaged with over the decades, including Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Adlai Stevenson, Lyndon Johnson, and the Kennedys. Its provisional title is "Name Dropping: From F.D.R. On." Galbraith writes longhand—"That is the speed at which my mind works"—and revises a great deal. It is usually at about the fifth draft, he says, that his trademark note of casual spontaneity enters the prose.

The walls of Galbraith's study are lined with photographs, and he took me on a tour. As we stood near a picture of him and John Kennedy at the 1960 Democratic Convention, in Los Angeles, I suggested that J.F.K. hadn't been much of an economics student. I was quickly corrected. "He had sound economic instincts," Galbraith said. "Much sounder than most politicians—Adlai Stevenson, for instance." When Kennedy entered the White House, many people expected Galbraith to return to Washington, but he went to India, as Ambassador, instead. In his autobiography he records his suspicion that Kennedy was glad to keep his opinionated presence eight thousand miles away, but he now told me that he was happy to take a diplomatic assignment. On arriving in New Delhi, he didn't let distance deter him from peppering the President with a stream of opinions and suggestions—suggestions that were recently published as "Letters to Kennedy." His official duties took up just a couple of hours a day, and the rest of his time he devoted to writing. Five other books date from his years in India—"Ambassador's Journal," "Economic Development," "The Scotch," "The McLandress Dimension" (his first novel), and "Indian Painting," which he wrote with Mohinder Singh Randhawa.

In 1963, Galbraith returned to Harvard. After Kennedy's death, there was speculation that he might become Lyndon Johnson's Ambassador to the United Nations, but nothing came of it. "Lyndon and I were great friends, but then we fell out over Vietnam, and I never saw him again," Galbraith said as we paused in front of a photograph of Johnson. He still believes L.B.J. was a good man and a true liberal, who was let down by his own insecurity. "This made him open to the advice of those who urged the seemingly strong as distinct from the restrained and considered course," he wrote in "A Life in Our Times." "Perhaps also his instinct was for an assertively masculine pose, as others have suggested. Combined, these qualities put him at the mercy of those who took pride not in their knowledge but in their will to act. Thus the disaster in Southeast Asia." In 1967, Galbraith became chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, which was by then a leading antiwar group; a year later, he was a key figure in the Eugene McCarthy campaign, which helped drive Johnson from office.

"The New Industrial State," which Galbraith wrote during the mid-sixties, was his most ambitious book yet, but also his most flawed. In common with many people at the time, he believed that major multinational corporations, such as General Motors, U.S. Steel, and I.T.T., were taking over the world. To some extent, they were, but Galbraith misinterpreted what that meant: to him it signalled the arrival of an all-powerful corporate bureaucracy—the "technostructure" that could manipulate consumers and politicians according to its grand design. "We have an economic system which, whatever its formal ideological billing, is in substantial part a planned economy," he wrote, and he pointed out that the rise of the technostructure wasn't confined to capitalist economies. "The modern large corporation and the modern apparatus of socialist planning are variant accommodations to the same need," he went on.

The misconception underlying these passages has since become obvious: Galbraith believed that competition was on the verge of disappearing; in reality, it was about to grow much more intense. During the ensuing three decades, state socialism collapsed, vast new industries emerged, and major American corporations, including a number of the ones that Galbraith had mentioned, were exposed to fierce competition from Asia and Europe. As a result, many members of the technostructure found themselves downsized and out of jobs. "Nobody talks about the technostructure anymore," Robert Solow said. "It overstated by a large margin the degree of control that the big corporations had over their markets."

On other questions, though, Galbraith continued to get it right. In "Economics and the Public Purpose," which was conceived amid the tumult of the late sixties and the early seventies, he wrote, "Dominating this book as a drumbeat is the theme of unequal development and the associated inequality in income." He added, "Left by themselves, economic forces do not work out for the best except perhaps for the powerful." Since those words were written, the degree of inequality in American society has widened sharply. As usual, Galbraith also identified the political aspect of the problem: most poor people don't vote, so there is no political constituency for higher spending on public services and education to relieve those people's plight. "The decisive step toward a good society is to make democracy genuine, inclusive," he wrote in "The Good Society," which was published in 1996.

Galbraith officially retired from Harvard in 1973, but he has by no means retired from the public debate. Convinced that another stock-market crash is likely—his little 1955 book, "The Great Crash," remains the most vivid account of that event—he has written numerous letters to the president of Harvard warning him to protect the university endowment, much of which is invested in stocks. Galbraith may turn out to be right or wrong on this matter, but he is still asking relevant and penetrating questions. It is his curiosity and his skepticism that make him worth reading, not his explications of everyday economics. His writings don't explain why hardback books are so much more expensive than softcovers or why a fall in the exchange rate tends to increase output; they address larger issues, such as why people buy goods at all and whether the gross domestic product is an adequate measure of human welfare. In that sense, he has taken up the burden of an earlier generation of American economists, such as Richard Ely, John R. Commons, and Thorstein Veblen—scholars who entered the subject when it didn't require prior training in advanced calculus and who went under the label "political economist." The label fits Galbraith perfectly, and he wears it with pride. ♦

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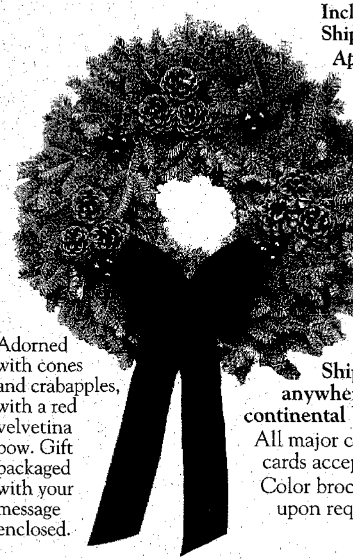

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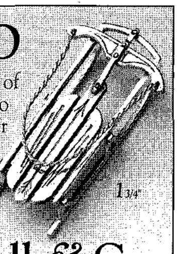

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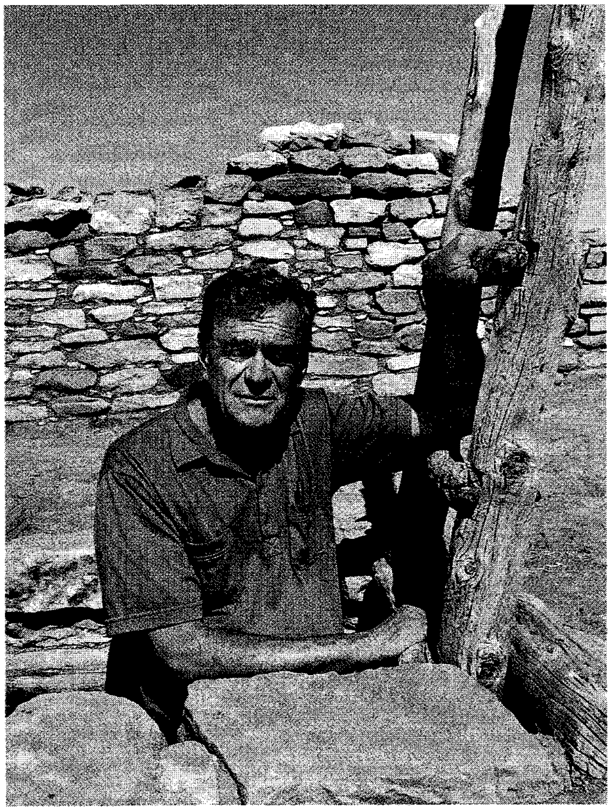
A REPORTER AT LARGE

CANNIBALS OF THE CANYON

Has a controversial anthropologist uncovered the truth about a great Southwestern civilization?

BY DOUGLAS PRESTON



MORE than a century ago, American travellers in the Southwest were astounded to find ruined cities and vast cliff dwellings dotting the desert landscape. Surely, they thought, a great civilization had once flourished here. It looked to them as if the people who created it had simply walked away and vanished: the ruins were often littered with gorgeous painted pottery and also contained grinding stones, baskets, sandals hanging on pegs, and granaries full of corn. The Navajo Indians, who were occupying much of the territory where this lost civilization once existed, called them the Anasazi—a word meaning "Ancient Enemy"—and they avoided the ruins, believing they were inhabited by *chindi*, or ghosts.

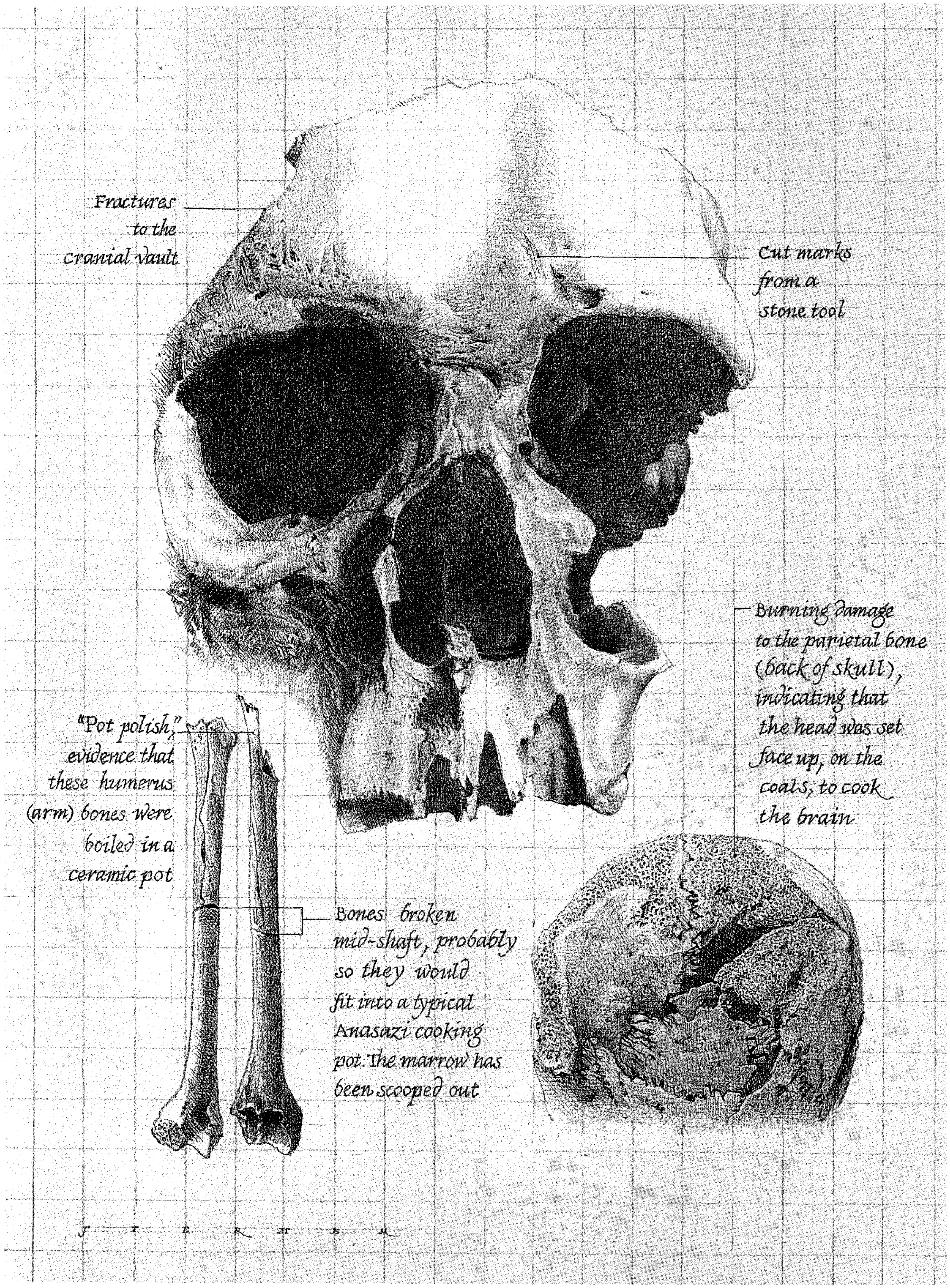
Not surprisingly, American archeologists focussed on the Anasazi and their great works, and they became the most intensely studied prehistoric culture in North America. A standard picture emerged, based on wide-ranging excavations of sites and on detailed ethnographic research among the Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo Indian tribes, who are the Anasazi's descendants. The Anasazi were—so the findings suggested—peaceful farmers, and they attained astonishing results in engineering, architecture, and art. The center of this cultural flowering, from the tenth century to the twelfth, seems to have been Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, a windswept gulch in the apparently endless sagebrush desert of the San Juan Basin. Chaco is marked by immense stone structures, some up to four stories high, called Great Houses. The largest, Pueblo Bonito, contains some six hundred and fifty rooms, and its construction required more than thirty thousand tons of shaped sandstone blocks. The Chaco Anasazi also built hundreds of miles of roads that stretched out from Chaco Canyon across the landscape in arrow-straight lines—an engineering marvel achieved without compass, wheel, or beast of burden. They erected shrines, solar and astronomical observatories, irrigation systems, and a network of signalling stations. They constructed more than a hundred Great Houses outside Chaco Canyon, spreading them over fifty thousand square miles of the Four Corners region of the Southwest. Many of these outlying Great Houses seem to have been connected to Chaco by the radiating pattern of roads. Archeologists today call this cultural explosion "the Chaco phenomenon." But the phenomenon ended abruptly around 1150 A.D., when a vast collapse apparently occurred, and Chaco, along with some of the outlying sites, was largely abandoned.

Equally remarkable was the Chaco society. It seemed to be almost utopian. The Anasazi, the traditional view held, had no absolute rulers, or even a ruling class, but governed themselves through consensus, as the Pueblo Indians do today. They were a society without rich or poor. Warfare and violence were rare, or perhaps unknown. The Anasazi were believed to be profoundly spiritual, and to live in harmony with nature.

As a result, the Anasazi captured the fancy of people outside the archeological profession, and particularly those in the New Age movement, many of whom see themselves as the Anasazi's spiritual descendants. The ruins of Chaco Canyon have long been a New Age mecca, to the point where one of the sites had to be closed, because New Agers were burying crystals and illegally arranging to have their ashes scattered there. During Harmonic Convergence, in 1987, thousands gathered in Chaco Canyon and joined hands, chanting and praying. People have also flocked to the villages of the present-day Pueblo Indians—the Hopi in particular—seeking a spirituality outside Western civilization. The Hopi themselves, along with other Pueblo Indian descendants of the Anasazi, feel a deep reverence for their prehistoric ancestors.

In 1967, a young physical anthropologist named Christy Turner II began looking at the Anasazi in a new light. He happened to be examining Anasazi teeth in the Museum of Northern Arizona, in Flagstaff, attempting to trace a peculiar trait known as the three-rooted first molar. On the last day of his research, he asked the curator to pull down a large, coffin-shaped cardboard box from a top shelf. The accession record said that the box contained remains from a remote area along Polacca

BRUCE GILDEN, MAGNUM; OPPOSITE: DUGALD STERMER


Fractures to the cranial vault
Cut marks from a stone tool
Burning damage to the parietal bone (back of skull), indicating that the head was set face up, on the coals, to cook the brain
"Pot polish," evidence that these humerus (arm) bones were boiled in a ceramic pot
Bones broken mid-shaft, probably so they would fit into a typical Anasazi cooking pot. The marrow has been scooped out

Christy Turner, opposite, at a ceremonial kiva. When he first presented his thesis, he says, "you could smell the disbelief."

Wash, an arroyo situated below First Mesa, on the Hopi Indian Reservation. The remains had been excavated in 1964 by an archeologist named Alan P. Olson. Turner removed the lid and found himself gazing at a bizarre collection of more than a thousand human bone shards. Thirty years later, when he described the experience to me, the memory was still vivid. "Holy smokes!" he recalled having exclaimed to himself. "What happened here? This looks exactly like *food* trash." The fragments reminded him of broken and burned animal bones that he had found in prehistoric Anasazi garbage mounds. As he looked more closely, another thought struck him. Like many physical anthropologists, he had sometimes done forensic work for police departments. Once, in California, the police had asked him to examine some remains that had been found in the Oakland Hills—a skeleton still wearing a pair of boots. Turner had informed the police that the person had been savagely beaten to death. "Now," he told me, "I could see the same violence done to the Polacca Wash bones."

Turner borrowed the bones from the museum and took them to Arizona State University, where he was a professor. In 1969, he presented his findings in a paper he read at an archeological meeting in Santa Fe. Word of what the paper would say had got around, and the room was packed. Co-written with a colleague of Turner's named Nancy Morris, the paper was entitled "A Massacre at Hopi." Turner informed the audience that the bones belonged to a group of thirty people—mostly women and children—who had been "killed, crudely dismembered, violently mutilated," and that the heads, in particular, showed extreme trauma: "Every skull is smashed, chiefly from the front, and massively so. . . . The faces were crushed while still covered with flesh." Most of the skulls had received a number of "blunt, heavy, club-like fracturing blows." The bone material had still been "vital" at the time the blows were struck. "The many small pieces of unweathered teeth and skulls and postcranial scrap suggest, but do *not* prove, that the death of these people occurred at the burial site." Moreover, "every skull, regardless of age or sex, had the brain exposed." Heads had been placed on flat rocks and smashed open, apparently so that the brain could be removed.

He went on to say that most of the bones—not only the skulls—also showed marks of cutting, chopping, dismemberment, butchering, "defleshing," and roasting. The larger bones had been broken apart and the marrow scraped out, or, in the case of spongy bone, reamed out. Turner and Morris concluded that the Polacca Wash bones represented "the most convincing evidence of cannibalism in all Southwest archaeology."

Turner said that Olson, the original excavator, had been wrong in assuming that the bones were prehistoric, for Turner had had the bones radiocarbon-dated, and the results had come back as 1580 A.D. plus or minus ninety-five years. Given the date, Turner wondered whether some record or legend might still exist relating what happened.

When he talked with me, he said, "We knew who the bods were. There were a certain number of kids and females. We looked at dental morphology. We got a good match with Hopi. So we asked ourselves, 'What is there in oral tradition about a whole bunch of Hopi being killed and eaten, or massacred, of this age and sex composition, at this date?' "

Turner eventually concluded that the Polacca Wash site was a place known in Hopi legend as the Death Mound. Hopi informants had first described the legend to an anthropologist at the end of the nineteenth century. According to the story, sometime in the late sixteen-hundreds a Hopi village called Awatovi had been largely converted to Christianity under the influence of Spanish friars. In addition, the people of Awatovi practiced witchcraft, which the Hopi considered a heinous crime. Eventually, five other Hopi villages decided to purge the tribe of this spiritual stain. An attack was organized by the chief of Awatovi himself, who had become disgusted with his own people. Warriors from the other villages attacked the errant village at dawn, surprising most of the men inside the kivas—sunken ceremonial chambers of the Pueblo Indians—and burning them alive. After killing the men, the warriors captured groups of women and children. As one of these groups was being marched away, a dispute broke out over which village would get to keep the captives. The argument got out of hand. In a rage, the warriors settled it by torturing, killing, and dismembering all the captives. Their bodies were left at a place called Mas-teo'-mo, or Death Mound. "If the stories are correct," the anthropologist who first collected these legends wrote, "the final butchery

"Go ahead. Don't think of it as plagiarism, think of it as an homage."

at Mas-teo'-mo must have been horrible."

Turner recalls that the lecture room was quiet when he finished arguing that the bones were the remains of a cannibal feast. "You could *smell* the disbelief," he said. Most of his colleagues felt that there simply had to be another explanation for the strange bone assemblage. To suggest that the Hopi could have deliberately tortured, murdered, mutilated, cooked, and eaten a defenseless group of women and children from their own tribe seemed to make a mockery of a hundred years of cautious, diligent scholarship. The paper was looked upon with deep skepticism by many of Turner's peers, and the Hopi objected to what they considered a crude slur on their ancestors.

Over the next thirty years, Turner looked deeper into the archeological record for signs of cannibalism—going all the way back to the Hopi's Anasazi ancestors. To his surprise, he discovered that a number of claims of Anasazi violence and cannibalism had been published by archeologists, but the profession, perhaps blinded by the conventional wisdom, had ignored the reports, the notes, the evidence, the very bones.

"He just up and died. Typical."

• •

Turner has identified many Anasazi sites that he believes represent "charnel deposits"—heaps of cannibalized remains. Next month, the University of Utah Press will publish the results of his work, under the title "Man Corn: Cannibalism and Violence in the Prehistoric American Southwest." The term "man corn" is the literal translation of the Nahuatl (Aztec) word *tlacatlaolli*, which refers to a "sacred meal of sacrificed human meat, cooked with corn." (The book had a co-author, in Turner's wife, Jacqueline—also an anthropologist—who died in 1996.)

"Man Corn" reëxamines seventy-two Anasazi sites at which violence or cannibalism may have occurred. Turner claims that cannibalism probably took place at thirty-eight of these sites, and that extreme violence and mutilation occurred at most of the others. He calculates that at least two hundred and eighty-six individuals were butchered, cooked, and eaten, with a mean of between seven and eight individuals per site. As a test to see how widespread cannibalism might have been, Turner also examined a collection of eight hundred and seventy Anasazi skeletons in the Museum of Northern Arizona. He found that eight per cent—one skeleton in twelve—showed clear evidence of having been cannibalized.

Turner's book does more than attack the traditional views of the Anasazi. It also addresses one of the great unsolved problems of American archeology: What caused the collapse of the Chaco culture around 1150? There was a severe drought at the time, but most researchers don't believe that it alone could have brought about such a cultural implosion. Other, unknown factors must have played a role.

After the Chaco collapse and abandonment, many Anasazi moved into deep, remote canyons, building their dwellings in cliffs or on high, often fortified, mesas. A century later, they abandoned even these defensive positions, leaving almost the entire Four Corners region uninhabited. To some archeologists, it seemed as if the Anasazi had been seized with paranoia—that they were protecting themselves from some terrible enemy. But, no matter how hard archeologists looked, they could find no such enemy.

BONE CAKES

I HAVE been following Turner's work for about ten years. He is one of the country's leading physical anthropologists and has a reputation for being something of a loner—brilliant, arrogant, even intimidating. When I heard rumors that he was finishing his monumental treatise on cannibalism, I paid him a visit at Arizona State University, in Tempe, just outside Phoenix. The door to his office led me into a dim dogleg space created by the backs of shelves and filing cabinets that stood in the middle of the room. At one end of a scarred oak table lay an untidy heap of plastic bags containing broken human

CONVERSATION

This conversation is like a long walk
together in the autumn woods.

Mossy silence of shadow, eloquent longing
of birds, thunder softened by distance.

A stag crosses the trail up ahead,
a wildness we had thought extinct.

Leaves, the shades of earth, fall at our feet,
gifts from the wind we have to accept.

And now, just at goodbye, where the trail divides,
sudden pathos of sweet rain.

—Leonard Nathan

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bones, including skulls. Dental picks, a tiny magnifying glass, and other instruments rested nearby. The far wall was covered with photographs of skulls, of a grimacing mummy head, and of Hopi medicine men, among other things. A crude photocopy of an old sideshow bill was taped on another wall, near a computer terminal. The bill read, "The Head of the Renowned Bandit Joaquin! Will be exhibited for one day only, April 19, 1853. Plus the hand of the notorious robber and murderer Three Fingered Jack."

Turner sat behind an old desk next to a window, which overlooked a pleasant courtyard with two palm trees. He is sixty-four, and has sandy hair and bleached, watery brown eyes behind large glasses. His skin is rough and leathery from years of outdoor work in the sun.

Turner was born in Columbia, Missouri, and grew up in Southern California. "I was baptized without being consulted," he told me. "Presbyterian. I hated it so much it turned me quickly to Darwin." He had been a premedical student at the University of Arizona, but he switched to anthropology. Best known for work he has done on dental morphology—the shapes of human teeth—he has spent most of his academic life attempting to trace the various waves of human migration from Asia to America by looking at teeth.

I spent three days with Turner. He is a mercurial man, who can be by turns gracious, witty, charming, aggressive, and vituperative. It is perhaps a good thing that he has surrounded himself with the dead, because in dealing with the living he is legendarily difficult. "I have no friends, but I have no scars," he told me. He seems to relish being on the unpopular side of an academic fight. According to his daughter, Korri, "He loves it, being branded politically incorrect."

After chatting with Turner for a while, I asked him about the heap of bones on his table. He said that they were from a site called Sambrito Village, on the San Juan River, in New Mexico. It had been excavated thirty-five years before, when the area was to be drowned by Navajo Reservoir. The excavating archeologist had concluded that cannibalism had occurred there, but his finding was ignored. Turner was now reëxamining the bones for his book.

"All the makings of cannibalism are here," he said enthusiastically, pointing to the charnel heap. He lifted a plastic bag holding a piece of skull, and slid the piece into his hand, cradling it gently. "This is a good one to illustrate the roasting of the head. A lot of the heads have this burning pattern on the back." He indicated a patch on the skull where the bone was crumbling and flaking off. He handed it to me, and I took it gingerly. "Clearly," he continued, "they were decapitating the heads and putting them in the fire face up."

"Why?" I asked. "To cook the brain?"

"It would have cooked the brain, yes," he said, rather dryly.

"What happens when a brain is cooked?"

"Thinking stops. Except among some of my students."

Turner pointed to the broken edge of the skull, which showed several places where sharp blows had opened the brainpan: small pieces of broken skull were still adhering to the edges. "These are perimortem breaks. This cannot happen except in fresh bone," he said. "Perimortem" refers to events at the time of death. Most of the bones, he said, showed numerous perimortem breaks; the crushing, splintering, and breaking of the bones had thus occurred just before, at, or just after death.

"How old was this person, and of what sex?" I asked.

Turner took the skull and flipped it over. "No signs of sutural closing. I'd put it at eighteen to twenty years. Sex is female. There are very light brow ridges, orbit is sharp, mastoid is relatively small, bone is light. I couldn't rule out a very light male."

He rummaged through the pile and showed me other bones. Some had cuts and marks of sawing near the joints, caused by dismemberment with stone tools. He pointed out similar cuts where the muscles had been attached to the bone—evidence that meat had been stripped off. He showed me percussion marks from stone choppers used to break open bones for marrow and to hack through the skulls.

Turner was the first person ever to quantify what a set of cannibalized human remains looks like. Eventually, in the course of his work, he identified five characteristics that he felt had to be present in a bone assemblage before one could claim that the individual had been cooked and eaten:

(1) Bones had to be broken open as if to get at the marrow.

(2) Bones had to have cutting and sawing marks on them, made by tools, in a way that suggested dismemberment and butchering.

(3) Some bones had to have "anvil abrasions." These are faint parallel scratches, which Turner noticed most often on skulls, caused when the head (or another bone) is placed on a stone that serves as an anvil, and another

stone is brought down hard on it to break it open. When the blow occurs, a certain amount of slippage takes place, causing the distinctive abrasions.

(4) Some bone fragments had to be burned; heads, in particular, had to show patterns of burning on the back or top, indicating that the brain was cooked.

(5) Most of the vertebrae and spongy bone had to be missing. Vertebrae and spongy bone are soft and full of marrow. They can be crushed whole either to make bone cakes (something the Anasazi did with other mammal bones) or to extract grease through boiling. (Fresh bone is full of grease.)

While Turner was involved in his multi-decade project, Tim D. White, a well-known paleoanthropologist, made another discovery. In examining a six-hundred-thousand-year-old fossilized skull from Africa, he noticed some peculiar scratches. They looked as if someone had scraped and carved the flesh from the skull with a stone tool. He wondered whether the skull was evidence of cannibalism deep in the human fossil record.

To learn more about what cannibalism does to bones, White turned his attention to the American Southwest. In 1973, in Mancos Canyon, Colorado, an archeological team had found the broken and burned remains of approximately thirty people scattered on the floors of a small ruined pueblo. White borrowed the bones in the summer of 1985 and studied them intensively for the next five years. He found all five of the indications of cannibalism that Turner had identified. But he also noticed another peculiar trait: a faint polishing and bevelling on many of the broken tips of bones. White wondered if this polishing might have been caused by the bones' being boiled and stirred in a rough ceramic pot, to render their fat. To test the idea, White and his team performed an experiment. They broke up several mule-deer bones and put the pieces in a replica of an Anasazi corrugated clay cooking pot, partly filled with water, and then heated the mixture on a Coleman stove for three hours, stirring it occasionally with a wooden stick. The fat from the bones rose to the surface and coagulated around the waterline, forming a ring of grease about half an inch thick. They decanted the contents, and White took a bone piece and scraped off the ring of fat around the inside of the pot.

Under magnification, the deer bones showed the same microscopic polishing that White had observed on the Mancos bones. Furthermore, the bone used to scrape out the ring of fat showed a pattern of scratches that exactly matched that of one Mancos bone. White called this "pot polish."

On learning of White's discovery, Turner took a second look at many of his cannibalized assemblages. He found pot polish on most of them, including the Polacca Wash bones, and he added pot polish to his list. (For the most part, Turner and White communicate with each other via scholarly journals; they have no personal relationship.)

I asked Turner if there were any examples of pot polish among the bones in his office. He searched around and pulled out a tiny fragment. He went to his desk for a hand-held magnifier and examined the fragment in the brilliant Arizona light. "This is polishing," he said, with a grin, holding it up like a jewel. "I wanted you to see this. It's from Burnt Mesa, in New Mexico. Alan Brew is the excavator. The interesting thing is that the polishing occurs only on the ends of the fragments, not on the mid-portion. The physics of a pot prohibit it. We also don't get the polishing on the large pieces that won't fit into the pot."

He handed me the bone and the magnifier. As I examined it in the light, I could see a bright polished line along one fractured edge of bone.

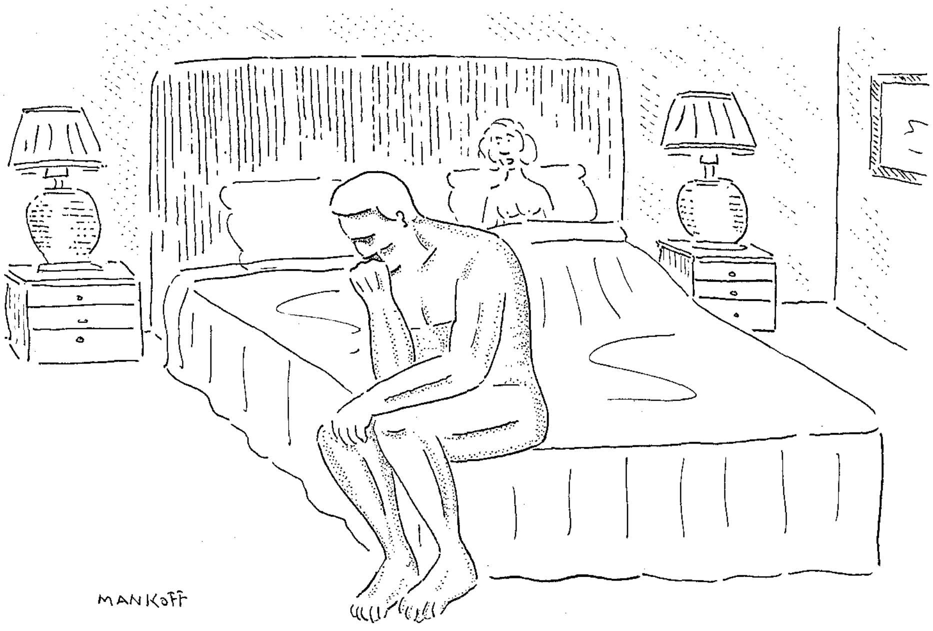
"Just a delightful break," Turner said.

"Did you experiment with deer bones, like Tim White?" I asked, handing the bone back.

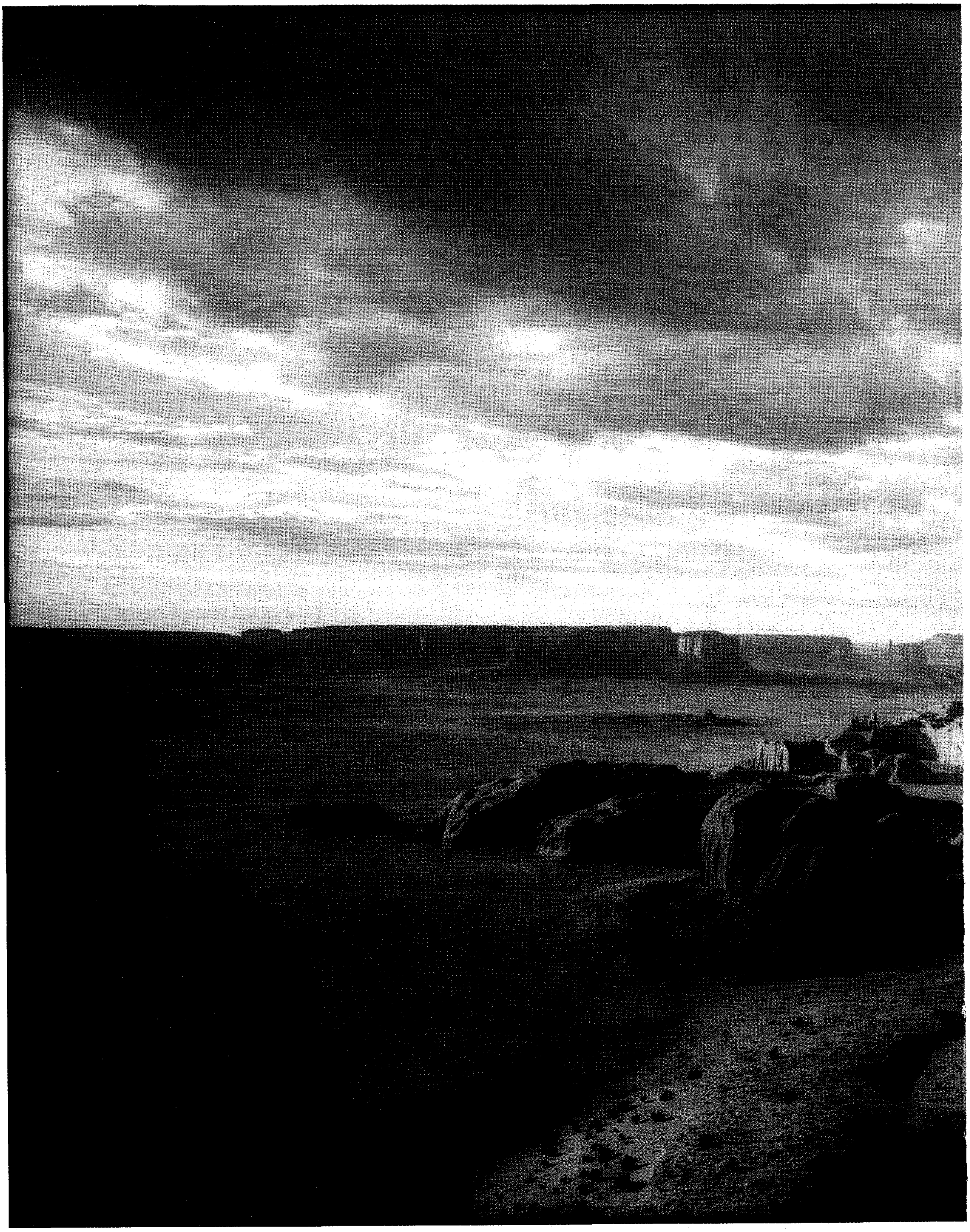
"We can't get deer in the grocery store," he said. "We used beef and chicken."

SENSITIVITIES

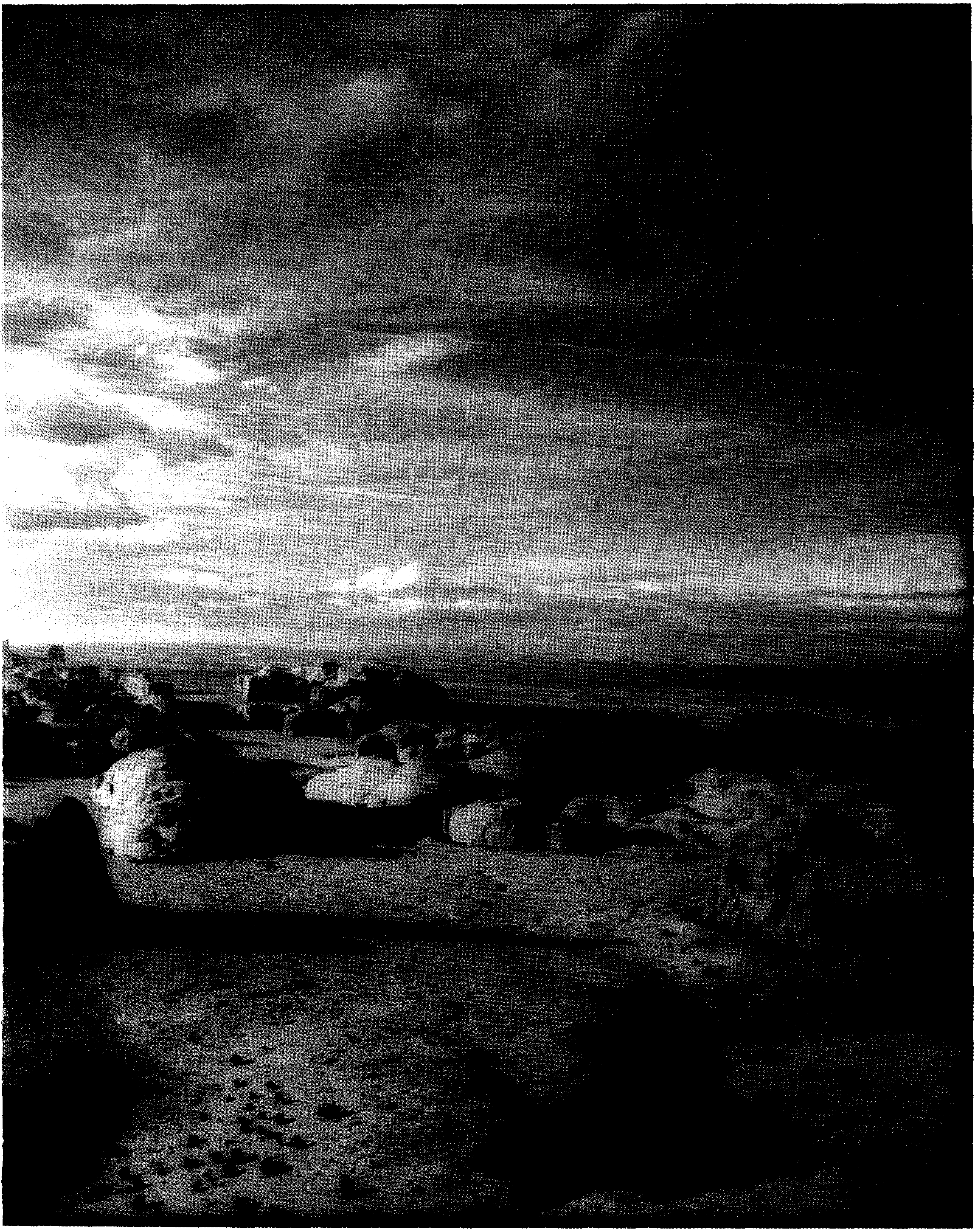
TURNER'S work on Anasazi cannibalism took place during a much larger debate on cannibalism worldwide. In 1979, William Arens, a professor of anthropology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, published an influential book entitled "The Man-Eating Myth." The book questioned the very existence of cannibalism in human societies, and it was widely reviewed. (*The New Yorker* called it "a model of disciplined and fair argument.") Arens argued that there were no reliable, firsthand accounts of cannibalism anywhere in the historical or ethnographic record. He showed that published reports of cannibalism were mostly hearsay, from unreliable witnesses, who talked about something they had not seen personally. Despite a diligent search, he said, he had been unable to find even one anthropologist, living or dead, who claimed to have witnessed cannibalism. (Apparently, not



"Believe me, you're just thinking about it too much."



Monument Valley, looking north, with Thunderbird Mesa and its Anasazi "place of ghosts," situated to the left of center. Did a period of great terro



nd social chaos, brought on by marauding "Manson types" from the south, seize the valley a thousand years ago? Photograph by Aernout Overbeeke.

even D. Carleton Gajdusek, who in 1976 won a Nobel Prize in Medicine for identifying a cannibalistic disease called *kuru* among the Fore tribe of New Guinea, had ever seen it.) Arens documented how some anthropologists in Brazil and elsewhere had badgered and hectored their informants until they finally "admitted" that their ancestors had been cannibals. He argued that vivid accounts of cannibalism collected by the Spanish in the Caribbean and in central Mexico were mostly written by people who were attempting to justify conquest, conversion, and enslavement.

Calling one's neighbor a cannibal, Arens went on to say, was the ultimate insult. It was always members of some tribe down the river or over the mountains who were cannibals. Or it was one's bad old ancestors, before contact with "superior," European civilization. Arens took his profession to task for not demanding more rigorous evidence before making such claims. "You have to ask anthropologists why they need cannibalism," he wrote, and he went on to give an answer: that anthropologists love cannibalism because they thrive on the exotic, the weird, the strange; they want to perpetuate the idea that some people are radically different from us and thus worth studying. Arens's book leaves little doubt that anthropologists have accepted, eagerly and uncritically, many dubious accounts of cannibalism. Naturally, when the book was published many anthropologists objected to it, but a surprising number of scientists (particularly archeologists) felt that Arens had made a valid point, which needed to be tested. "The Man-Eating Myth" bolstered Turner's critics and contributed to an atmosphere in which his assertions were regarded with suspicion.

"Thanks for getting married on such short notice."

I called up Arens to find out what he thought of Turner's work, twenty years later. Surprisingly, he turned out to be a Turner believer. Cannibalism, he said, was "a possible interpretation, even a good interpretation," of Turner's bone assemblages. He worried, however, that most people would conclude that all the Anasazi were cannibals—and, by extension, all Native Americans. "There's a whole discipline in existence looking for 'savage' behavior among the people we have colonized, conquered, and eradicated. That point almost *has* to be made—that the people here before us were cannibals—to justify our genocide of Native Americans."

Turner still has many articulate detractors. One of the most outspoken is Kurt Dongoske, a white man who is the archeologist for the Hopi tribe. Dongoske doesn't take issue with Turner's analysis of how the bones were processed, but he objects to Turner's conclusion that any people were actually eating the cooked meat. There is simply no proof that the meat was consumed, he told me, nor does he believe that Turner has sufficiently considered other alternatives, such as bizarre mortuary practices. Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma, who is the director of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, wonders why Turner assumed that the Polacca Wash bones, if they were cannibalized at all, represented Hopi-on-Hopi cannibalism. He points out that Navajo, Apache, and Ute all raided the Hopi, killing men and stealing women and children. He feels that it was unfair of Turner to pursue this research without the Hopi tribe's being involved. "Turner has never sat down with us," Kuwanwisiwma says. "There was an open invitation, back in 1993, to come before the Hopi people and see if he was able to explain his research to us, and he refused. He never made contact with us before or after." Turner, for his part, says that the invitation was extended for only one visit and that he couldn't come for personal reasons. He says he offered to come at another time but never received a response. As for the possibility that other tribes had carried out these acts against the Hopi, Turner said that the Awatovi story best fitted the facts.

Others have accused Turner of insensitivity in presenting such inflammatory findings. Duane Anderson, an archeologist who is the vice-president of the highly respected School of American Research, in Santa Fe, has said that Turner, in common with some other physical anthropologists, doesn't show much concern about how his work might affect living, related people. "There's a tendency when dealing with bones to treat the material as *objects*, rather than as *subjects*."

Many of Turner's critics have proposed alternative explanations. J. Andrew Darling, the executive director for the Mexico-North Research Network, in Chihuahua, wrote a paper (not yet published) suggesting that the bones might be those of witches executed in a particularly grisly fashion. The utter destruction of the witch's body through dismemberment, defleshing, burning, boiling, and crushing was an attempt to efface his or her evil powers. He cites known instances of Pueblo Indian witches' being killed, violently mutilated, and dismembered. Debra L. Martin, a professor of biological anthropology at Hampshire College, in Massachusetts, and an authority on Anasazi violence, also feels that Turner rejected other explanations out of hand. "I don't see why those bones couldn't have been stomped on, cut up, broken apart, and boiled ritually" without being eaten, she said. "And why isn't there anything about cannibalism in the ethnographic record? I would like to see just one clan history, one story, one early Spanish account, that confirms this." Martin herself examined some of Turner's bone assemblages. "Christy homogenizes all these assemblages in his publications," she pointed out. "He makes them all seem alike. But they're not. What if the explanation is a lot more interesting? What if it's something grander than this? Maybe some cannibalism, some witchcraft executions, and some really unusual or interesting mortuary practices?" She made another point. Because Turner did not collaborate with Native Americans, "they are making a special effort to reclaim and bury those bones," she said. "He'll have been the only person who's looked at them, and that's too bad."

Others are even more blunt in describing Turner. "He's not nice," one colleague said. "He's a pain in the ass." Another called him "loud" and "a bully."

There is a high level of apprehension at some of the museums where Turner has done his research. At the Museum of Northern Arizona, his longtime hangout, I was firmly denied permission even to enter the collection area, let alone look at the bones Turner had worked on. "We're walking a tightrope here," Noland Wiggins, a collections supervisor, said apologetically. "Because, as you may imagine, the tribes are not too happy with Christy's research."

Turner doesn't shy away from responding forcefully to his critics. In a recent paper he accused one of them of "playing to the choir" and called Dongoske "self-serving." He also considered it strange that his critics and the Hopi were more exercised over cannibalism than over violence and mutilation. "How can you tolerate killing, murder, and torture and then be so horrified by cannibalism? Why is it that the Hopi can admit killing eight hundred at Awatovi as if it were nothing, but then the whole universe falls apart when they are accused of cannibalism?"

I asked him why he felt that there had been so much opposition to his ideas.

"There's a simple answer," he said, with a mirthless smile. "In our culture, cannibalism is a food taboo. That's the essence of this whole problem."

Although Turner admitted that he had no direct evidence that human meat was eaten at any of the sites, he said that he based his fundamental conclusion of cannibalism on the scientific principle of Occam's razor: the simplest explanation fitting the facts is probably the right one. "There's still a chance," he said sarcastically, "that aliens are doing this." Nevertheless, his critics continue to point out that he lacks proof. In 1996, Kurt Dongoske was quoted in *National Geographic* as saying that Anasazi cannibalism would not be proved until "you actually find human remains in prehistoric human excrement."

IN the early nineteen-nineties, a firm called Soil Systems won a contract to excavate a group of archeological sites at the base of Sleeping Ute Mountain, in Colorado, on the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation. The Ute planned to irrigate and farm seventy-six hundred acres of land, and the law required them to excavate any archeological sites that would be disturbed. The project director at Soil Systems was a young man named Brian Billman, who is now an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

He and his team began work in 1992, and at one unremarkable site along Cowboy Wash, called 5MT 10010, he and two colleagues, Patricia Lambert and Banks Leonard, made a grotesque discovery. The results have not yet been published, but Billman was willing to talk to me about them—up to a point. We spoke by telephone the day before he was to go off to Peru to do fieldwork. Billman spoke slowly and carefully, weighing every word, and this is the story he told:

When the team began excavating, they uncovered what seemed at first a typical Anasazi site—some rooms, a trash mound, and, lined up in a row, three kivas. As the team dug out the first kiva, they found a pile of chopped-up, boiled, and burned human bones at the base of a vent shaft leading up and out of the kiva. It looked as though the bones had been chopped up and cooked outside, on the surface, and then dumped down the shaft. There were cut marks on the bones made by stone tools, and the long bones had been systematically broken up for marrow extraction.

In the second kiva, they found the remains of five individuals. In this case, it appeared that the bones had been processed inside the kiva itself. "Instead of boiling," Billman recalled, "it looked more like roasting going on." Here cut marks at muscle attachments suggested that the bones had been defleshed, and again they had been split open for marrow. The skulls of at least two of the individuals had been placed upside down on the fire, roasted, and broken open, and the cooked brains presumably scooped out. In that same kiva, the team found a stone tool kit such as was typically used in butchering a midsized mammal. The kit contained an axe, hammerstones, and two large flakes with razor-thin cutting edges. Billman submitted the tool kit to a lab, and the two flakes tested positive for human blood.

The third kiva contained only two small pieces of bone, which had apparently been washed down from the surface. In the dead ashes of the central hearth, however, the team made an "extremely unusual" find. It was a nondescript lump of some material, which was field-classified as a "macrobotanical remain"—a piece of an unidentified plant. A worker put it in a bag, and when the team had a chance to examine it more closely, back in the laboratory, they realized that it was a desiccated human turd, or coprolite. "After the fire had gone cold," Billman said, "someone had squatted over this hearth and defecated into it."

Billman sent the coprolite off to a lab at the University of Nebraska for analysis. The first oddity the lab noted was that it contained no plant remains; other tests indicated that the coprolite had formed from digested meat. From a pollen analysis, the lab could tell that the coprolite had been deposited in the late spring or early summer, at the same time of year that the site was abandoned.

In three nearby ruined sites, another group of excavators also found chopped-up, boiled, and burned bones scattered about. The four sites, which seemed to constitute a small community, contained a total of twenty-eight butchered individuals. Mysteriously, all four sites were filled with valuable, portable items, such as baskets, a rabbit blanket, pots, and ground-stone tools. Little, if anything, seemed to have been taken.

"This site has a frozen instant of time in it," Billman said. "You could almost read it." What he read was: The year was approximately 1150. Times were hard. The area was in the grip of a severe drought. Pollen samples showed that a crop failure had probably occurred the previous year. One late-spring day, the community was attacked. The people were killed, cooked, and eaten. Then, in an ultimate act of contempt, one of the killers defecated in a hearth, the symbolic center of the family and the household. Instead of looting the site, the invaders left it and its many valuables for all to see.

"When I excavated it," Billman told me, "I got the sense that it may have been taboo. We are proposing that this may have been a political strategy. One or several communities in this area may have used raiding and cannibalism to drive off people from a village and prevent other people from settling there. If you raided a village, consumed some of the residents, and left the remains there for everyone to see, you would gain the reputation of being a community to stay away from."

Billman, Lambert, and Leonard presented their findings at the 1997 Society for American Archaeology meetings, in Nashville, and they were subsequently reported by Catherine Dold in *Discover*. At the end of the Nashville symposium, a man came up to Billman, introduced himself as Richard Marlar, and said, "I'm a biochemist, and I think I can tell you if there is human tissue in that coprolite"—in other words, he could determine directly whether or not cannibalism had occurred. Billman sent some samples of the coprolite off to Marlar for analysis, along with some pieces of a ceramic Anasazi cooking pot found at the site.

I recently called up Richard Marlar, who is an associate professor of pathology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, in Denver. "I heard his talk," Marlar said. "I said to myself, 'I can figure that out. We can answer that question.'" The basic problem, he realized, was that he needed a way to identify human tissue that had passed through the digestive system of another human being. He had to make sure he was not picking up traces of human blood in the intestinal tract (from internal bleeding) or cells naturally shed from the lining of the intestine. He finally decided to test the coprolite for the presence of human myoglobin, a protein that is found only in skeletal and heart muscle, and could not get into the intestinal tract except through eating. (As a control, Marlar tested many stool samples from patients in his hospital, to verify that none had traces of myoglobin in them.)

Marlar set up an immunological assay of the kind that is normally used in clinical medicine to determine whether someone has a disease. So far, he explained to me, he had performed seven tests, each in triplicate, using twenty-one samples of the coprolite. He also ran six tests on the ceramic pottery to see if it had traces of human protein from cooking. All the results, he told me, were the same.

"And what were those results?" I asked.

He declined to answer. The Ute tribe had asked all the excavators to keep the results confidential until the paper could be published.

In the small world of Southwestern archeology, very little can be kept secret, and I soon began to hear rumors about the results. I tracked them down and established that the tests had been positive. All of Marlar's assays, I learned, had shown the presence of human myoglobin protein in the coprolite and on the interior walls of the cooking pot.

THE GREAT TERROR

For thirty years, Turner had been documenting cannibal sites, but for a long time he had not tackled the question "Why?" It is this question that he takes up in the last, and what is certain to be the most controversial, chapter of "Man Corn." He advances a theory of who the cannibals were, where they came from, and what role the eating of "men, women, and children alike" may have played in Anasazi society. For this was not, he says, starvation cannibalism, such as befell the Donner party. Starvation cannibalism did not explain the extreme mutilation of the bodies before they were consumed, or the huge charnel deposits, consisting of as many as thirty-five people (that's almost a ton of edible human meat), or the bones discarded as trash. Furthermore, there was no evidence of starvation cannibalism (or any other kind of cannibalism) among the Anasazi's immediate neighbors, the Hohokam and the Mogollon, who lived in equally harsh environments and endured the same droughts.

A colleague of Turner's, David Wilcox, who is a curator at the Museum of Northern Arizona, had prepared a map showing the distribution of Chaco Great Houses and roads. Using Wilcox's map, Turner was able to chart charnel deposits in time and space. "When we found that Dave's Chaco maps coincided with my cannibalized assemblages," Turner recalls, "that's when it came together." Turner decided that the civilization centered in Chaco Canyon was probably the locus of Anasazi cannibalism.

The maps, Turner says, showed that the charnel deposits were often situated near Chaco Great Houses and that most of them dated from the Chaco period. The eating of human flesh seems to have begun as the Chaco civilization began, around 900; peaked at the time of the Chaco collapse and abandonment, around 1150; and then all but disappeared (Polacca Wash being a notable exception).

Turner theorized that cannibalism might have been used by a powerful élite at Chaco Canyon as a form of social control. "It was order by terrorism," he said to me. "Big-stick order." In "Man Corn" he writes:

> Terrorizing, mutilating, and murdering might be evolutionarily useful behaviors when directed against unrelated competitors. And what better way to amplify opponents' fear than to reduce victims to the subhuman level of cooked meat, especially when they include infants and children from whom no power or prestige could be derived but whose consumption would surely further terrorize, demean, and insult their helpless parents or community? . . . The benefits would be threefold: community control, control of reproductive behavior (that is, dominating access to women), and food. From the standpoint of sociobiology, then, cannibalism could well represent useful behavior done by well-adjusted, normal adults acting out their ultimate, evolutionarily channelled behavior. On the other hand, one can easily look upon violence and cannibalism as socially pathological.

The second question Turner asked was "Who were these cannibals and where did they come from?" He looked around for a source. The Anasazi's immediate neighbors showed no evidence of being cannibalistic. "I couldn't find cannibalism in California or on the Great Plains, either," Turner said. "Where is it? In Mexico."

Turner directed his attention to central Mexico, to the empire of the Toltecs—the precursors of the Aztecs—which lasted from about 800 to 1100 A.D. Central Mexico, he writes, developed a "very powerful, dehumanizing sociopolitical and ideological complex," centered on human sacrifice and cannibalism used as a form of social control. Furthermore, cannibalism spread from central Mexico "into the jungle world of the Mayas and the desert world of Chichimeca" in northern Mexico. Turner concludes, "It takes nearly blind faith in the effectiveness of geographical distance . . . to believe that this complex and its adherents failed to reach the American Southwest."

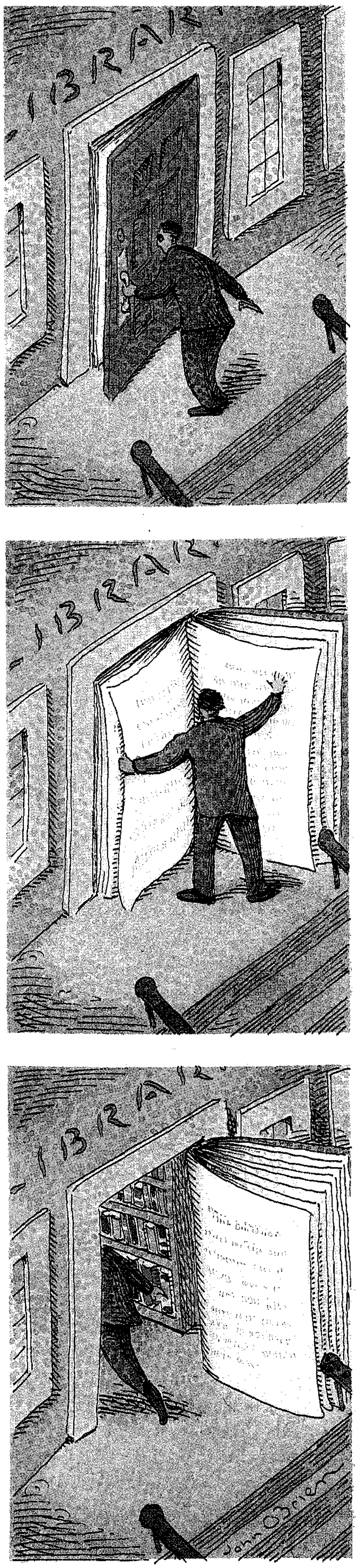
During the Toltec period, Turner hypothesizes, a heavily armed group of "thugs," "tinkers," or perhaps even "Manson party types" (as he put it to me in various conversations) headed north, to the region we refer to as the American Southwest. "They entered the San Juan Basin around A.D. 900," he surmises in "Man Corn," and "found a suspicious but pliant population whom they terrorized into reproducing the theocratic lifestyle they had previously known in Mesoamerica."

In other words, the flowering of Chaco society that we have so long admired—in engineering, astronomy, architecture, art, and culture—was the product of a small, heavily armed gang from Mexico, who marched into the Southwest to conquer and brutalize.

Archeologists have long known that there was a strong Mesoamerican influence on the Anasazi. There was extensive prehistoric trade between Mexico and the Southwest. Turquoise from Santa Fe has been found throughout Mesoamerica, and tropical parrots and macaws brought up live from Mexico have been found in Chaco graves. Indeed, corn, pottery, and cotton originally came into the Southwest from Mexico. There is good evidence, Turner writes in "Man Corn," that Mexicans did in fact make the journey northward. He notes that a skull found in Chaco Canyon had intentionally chipped teeth—a decorative trait thought to be restricted almost entirely to central Mexico. He also details many parallels between Hopi and Toltec mythology.

A number of Pueblo Indian myths seem to support Turner's cannibalism theories. For example, a Pueblo legend collected by the anthropologist John Gunn and published in 1916 describes a drought and famine in the past which reduced the people "to such an extremity that they killed and ate their children or weaker members of the tribe."

The Navajo tell many stories about Chaco Canyon that paint a very different picture from the popular Anglo



STORE
SALE
WOODMAN

view—stories that may also have been taken from the Pueblo Indians. While doing research for a book on the Navajo creation story, I was told a number of these stories. Chaco, some older Navajo say, was a place of hideous evil. The Chaco people abused sacred ceremonies, practiced witchcraft and cannibalism, and made a dreaded substance called corpse powder by cooking and grinding up the flesh and bones of the dead. Their evil threw the world out of balance, and they were destroyed in a great earthquake and fire.

CANNIBALISM seems to have peaked in the Southwest at the time of the Chaco collapse because the system of terror, Turner theorizes, could not be sustained. Terror begat social chaos. "The evidence is that cannibalism—and this chaos that ensued—started in the north and it rippled southward and it wiped the Southwest out," Turner told me. In other words, cannibalism and social terror may have been a factor—perhaps the *missing* factor—in the Chaco collapse. Turner doesn't reject the standard explanations of the Chaco implosion: he hypothesizes that social pathology and cannibalism, combined with one or more of the standard theories (drought, erosion, disease, famine), sparked chaos, violence, and the "near-extinction of the entire prehistoric Southwest population." The subsequent retreat of the Anasazi into inaccessible cliff dwellings and mesas now makes sense. The long-sought elusive enemy of the Anasazi was, in fact, themselves.

Turner gave me a paper he had just written and was planning to deliver at a conference. Entitled "The Darker Side of Humanity," the paper extends some of the ideas in the last chapter of "Man Corn." Turner writes, "I can easily imagine the cancerous random fractals of social chaos branching all over the Southwest, starting in the north with the collapse of Chaco and like a wildfire erupting here and there in hot spots of human violence. . . . Think of the hundreds of thousands of socially pathological killings and mutilations committed in central Africa these last few years. Think about Pol Pot."

Cannibalism was not "normal" behavior among the Anasazi, he argues, even if it was widespread. It was the product of a few socially pathological individuals who whipped up the emotions of their followers, like the chief of Awatovi who plotted the grim extinction of his own village. Turner compares such men as the Awatovi chief to Adolf Hitler, Genghis Khan, and Joseph Stalin.

This argument leads Turner into even stranger territory. In his paper he calls on archeologists to give up the time-honored "concept of culture." The problem with archeology is that it is a science of generalization. The archeologist digs a site and then extrapolates the findings into a description of a culture. The orientation of the archeologist is always toward matters like "What was usual and customary in this culture?" and "What was the norm?" There is no provision for abnormality, for the charismatic or sociopathic individual—the deranged Great Man. "In my thirty-five years of teaching I have never heard of a graduate student specializing in archeology who had taken a course or a seminar in abnormal psychology," Turner writes. "Why should they? . . . The very idea of abnormal behavior is alien to Southwest archaeological thinking." He suggests replacing the paradigm of culture with a "Darwinian paradigm of evolutionary psychology" that "emphasizes identification of individuals and seeks to understand their actions wherever possible." Only through this paradigm shift, Turner asserts, will archeologists be able to understand the darker side of human nature in the archeological record.

PLACE OF GHOSTS

ON my last day with Turner, he decided to visit a cannibal locale in Monument Valley, straddling the border of Utah and Arizona.

We left the cool ponderosas of Flagstaff on a June morning. By three o'clock, we had arrived at the escarpment that looks down on Monument Valley—surely one of the most dramatic landscapes on earth. We descended into the valley on a rutted dirt road, our two cars kicking up cork-screws of red dust, and after a few miles the Three Sisters came into view on the right, three spires of rock. According to a photograph that Turner had of the site—his only clue to where it was—it lay less than a mile from this valley landmark. As we bounced along the valley floor, the spires began to move into the alignment seen in the photograph.

Turner lurched off the road to follow a track in the bottom of a dry wash. We skirted the base of a large mesa, stopped, backtracked, and stopped again. Turner finally got out, squinting in the brilliant sunlight and clutching the photograph. "This is it," he said. "This is it, exactly."

We scrambled up the sandy rise above the wash. The site lay about twenty feet above the valley floor, on the talus slope of Thunderbird Mesa. It was a small patch of sand sheltered among giant plates of stone that had spalled from the cliff behind—a sheer wall of red sandstone four hundred feet high and streaked with glossy desert varnish. It was a breathtaking spot, commanding a sweeping view of Tse Biyi Flats, Rain God Mesa, the Three Sisters, Spearhead Mesa, and dozens of other buttes and mesas layered one against another, receding into vast distances. The afternoon sun was invading the valley, sculpting and modelling the buttes in crisp yellow light.

The site itself was covered with windblown sand and clumps of Indian rice grass and snakeweed. In the center lay a large, exquisite piece of a painted Anasazi pot, white with a black geometric design. Near the pot, the edge of a slab-lined hearth stuck up from the sand. The smashed, chopped, and burned bones of seven people had been found piled in this hearth. They were the remains of an old man and an old woman, a younger man, two teen-age girls, a third adolescent, of undetermined sex, and an infant. Turner believed that they had been ambushed, killed, mutilated, dismembered, and cooked right there, for the hearth seemed to have been custom-built for that purpose. After it had been used, the cracked and burned bones were left there in the fire pit and the site was abandoned.

Turner poked around the site, scowling and squinting, with two cameras swinging from his neck. "Dogoszhi black-on-white," he said, glancing at the potsherd and referring to a common Anasazi pottery type. He took a careful series of photographs of the site and its surroundings.

"Do you think that potsherd was left at the time of the massacre?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Why here?"

"That's a bit of a mystery. It's not *at* anything. But I wouldn't be surprised if there was a Great House near here, and somebody got waylaid." He pointed to a wedge of green growth nearby. "There must be an intermittent spring there. That would be part of the story—perhaps this was a hunting camp for deer or antelope. Perhaps it was in wintertime. This is a nice place in the winter."

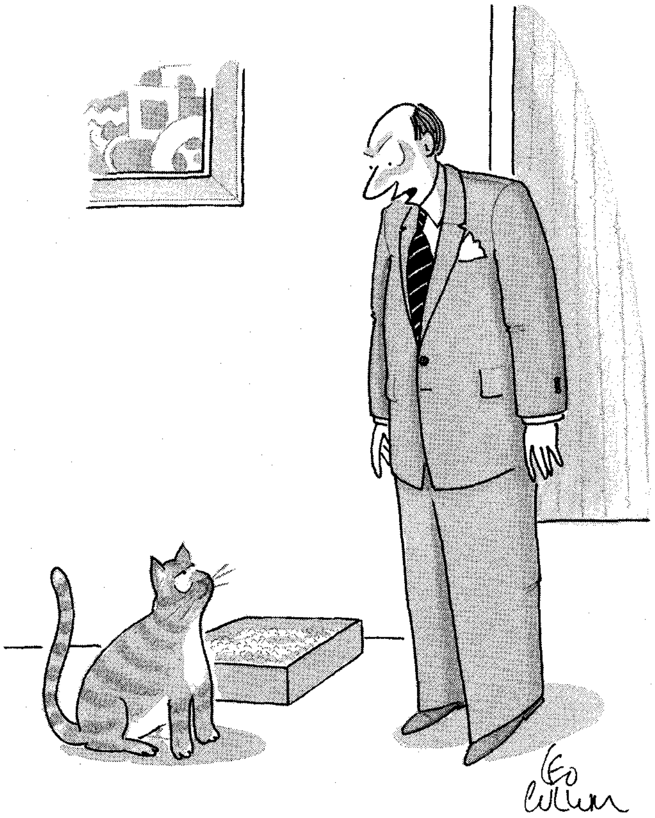
As we were tramping around the site, an old Navajo man came by in a pickup truck, which had two dazed, dust-covered tourists in the back. He was wearing a straw cowboy hat and was missing his front teeth. He stopped the truck.

"Any Anasazi ruins around here?" Turner called out.

"Over there," the man said, his hand waving obscurely across thousands of desolate acres. He seemed reluctant to talk more about the Anasazi, and drove on.

"That fellow was vague about ruins," Turner said to me. "But there must be some nearby. This is a *chindi* place"—a place of ghosts. He continued to move restlessly around the site—a skinny man with a potbelly and sticklike arms and legs—staring into every recess. Only the occasional click of his camera broke the stillness. I remembered my first interview with Turner, when I had asked him why he was investigating cannibalism. He had replied breezily, "I think it's interesting. It's fun. Here's an unsolved problem." As I looked at his face, I could see that he was indeed having a marvellous time.

Turner moved back to the car. I remained at the spot and looked around, trying to arrive at an understanding of what had happened here. The age and sex of the remains suggested that they might have been an extended family—two parents, three teen-age children, a son-in-law, and a little grandchild, perhaps. I thought of my own family. The light deepened. A grasshopper began scratching among the dry stones, and a faint breeze brought with it the scent of sun-warmed sand. ♦



"Never, ever, think outside the box."

POPULAR CHRONICLES

PLANT CRIMES

The strange things people will do for the orchids they love.

BY SUSAN ORLEAN

NOTHING in science can account for the way people feel about orchids. Those who love them love them madly. Orchids arouse passion more than romance. They are the sexiest flowers on earth. The word "orchid" derives from the Latin *orchis*, which means "testicle." This refers not only to the testicle-shaped pseudobulbs of the plant but also to the fact that it was long believed that orchids sprang from the spilled semen of mating animals. An orchid's appearance is, in fact, ravishing. One species looks like a German shepherd with its tongue hanging out. One looks like an octopus. One looks like a human nose. One looks like a pair of fancy shoes. One looks dead. There are species that look like butterflies, bats, ladies' handbags, swarms of bees, clamshells, camels' hooves, squirrels, nuns wearing wimples, and drunken old men. The smallest orchids are nearly microscopic, and the biggest ones have masses of flowers as large as footballs. The petals of some orchids are as soft as powder; others are as rigid and rubbery as inner tubes. They can be freckled or mottled or veiny or solid, their colors ranging from nearly neon to spotless white. Some look like the results of an accident involving paint.

A British herbal guide of 1653 advised that orchids be viewed with discretion: "They are hot and moist in operation, under the dominion of Venus, and provoke lust exceedingly." There is something delirious about orchid collecting. There are orchid babysitters and orchid doctors and orchid groomers and orchid boarding houses and orchid heirs designated in wills. A magazine recently reported that a customer of one orchid kennel in San Francisco had so many plants that he was paying two thousand dollars in monthly rent. A young Chinese collector, Hsu She-hua, who was not long ago described in newspaper reports as a fanatic, said that even though he had been hauled into court seven times for possessing illegal wild orchids he considered it worthwhile. Collecting orchids is a sort of lovesickness. Once afflicted, seemingly normal people become less like normal people; they become orchid addicts, orchid zealots. The most seriously afflicted cross the line: ever since people first began collecting orchids, some have been driven to smuggle them, poach them, and steal them—to become orchid traffickers and orchid rustlers and orchid thieves.

IN Victorian England, the orchid hobby became so consuming that it was sometimes called "orchidelirium." It began in 1833, when William George Spencer Cavendish, the Sixth Duke of Devonshire, fell in love with a slender, branching spray of dappled yellow doll-faced flowers—an oncidium—that he saw at an orchid exhibition staged by the Horticultural Society of London at one of his own estates, Chiswick, in Middlesex. Cavendish was deaf and depressed and was suspected of being a changeling, because his father had lived with his wife and also with his wife's best friend and had impregnated them both. Nonetheless, Cavendish received the family title. He lived alone and came to be known as the Bachelor Duke. He loved plants, and in 1838 was elected president of the Horticultural Society. At that time, however, tropical orchids were still mere curiosities. A few had been brought to England from the West Indies by colonial administrators, but by 1813 the orchid collection at the Botanic Gardens, in Kew, consisted of only forty-six tropical species. Once the Duke had been smitten by the oncidium, however, he instructed Joseph Paxton, the head gardener at his estate Chatsworth, in Der-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IRVING PENN

Rhyncholaelia digbyana. Once they fa

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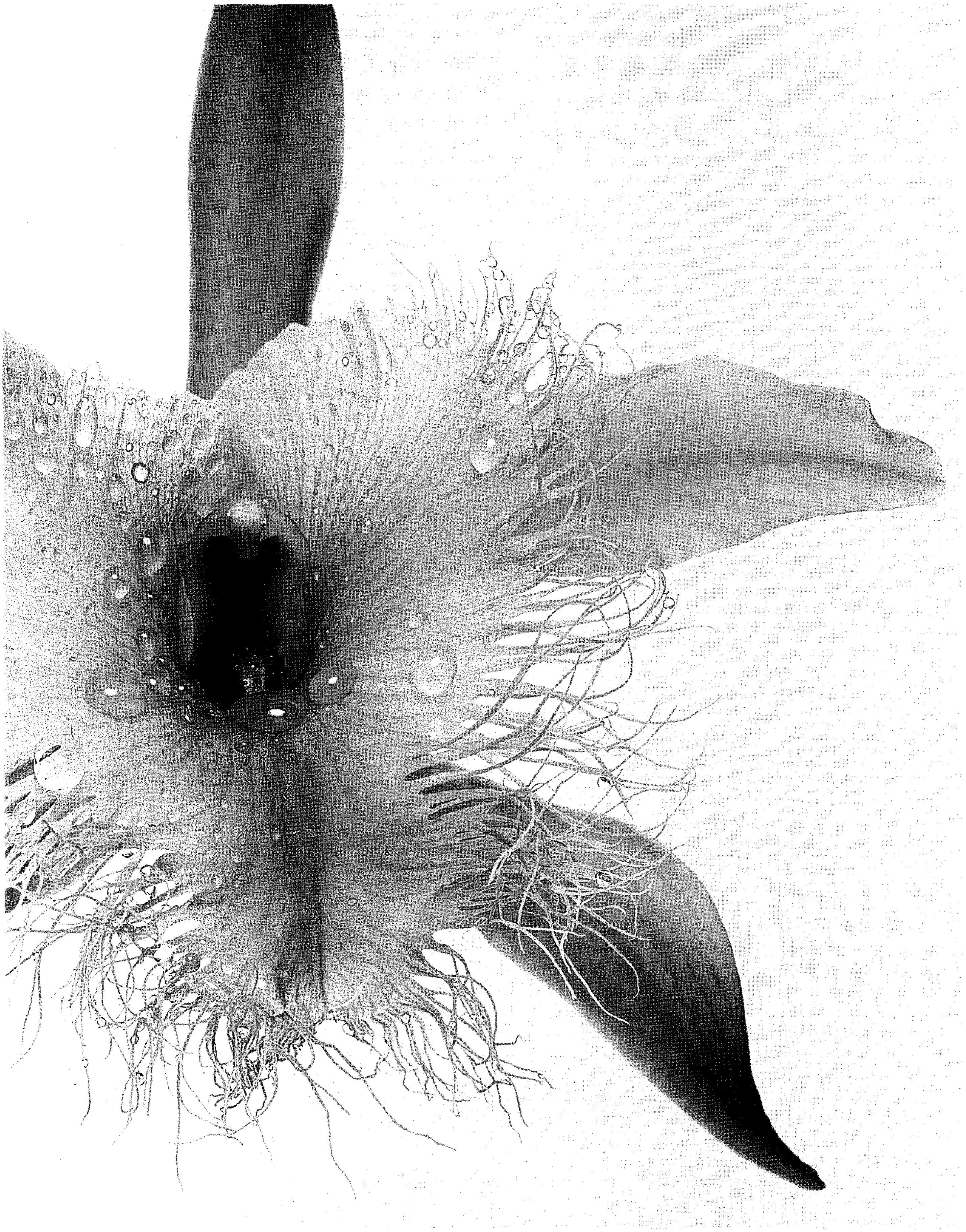


nder the spell of orchids, seemingly normal people become less like normal people. The most seriously afflicted cross the line.

byshire, to begin acquiring orchids. Within ten years, Paxton had assembled the largest collection in England.

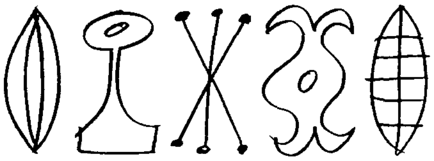
The Bachelor Duke's obsession ignited a fashion for tropical orchids in English high society which was similar to the Dutch tulip mania of the sixteen-thirties. People were captivated by the strangeness of orchids—their intricacy, their boggling diversity. An average Englishman couldn't afford a greenhouse or a gardener, but the longing for these bewitching plants seemed to have no class distinction. In 1851, a nurseryman named Benjamin Williams began a series of articles advocating orchid ownership for everyone through the use of new cultivation techniques. The series, called "Orchids for the Millions," was eventually published as a book that became so popular it was reprinted seven times.

Some Victorian orchid collectors went to the tropics themselves, but most stayed home and paid professional hunters to travel around the world and collect orchids for them. Having tropical orchids therefore indicated that you were rich enough to hire a man to do a task that might kill him. No one in England was very good at cultivating or breeding tropical orchids, so hunters were the only way to get nursery stock, and the big nurseries employed whole crews of them. In 1894, for instance, a preëminent Victorian orchid grower named Frederick Sander had sixty greenhouses at his estate, in St. Albans, and employed twenty hunters, who collected around the world for him, among them a man in Mexico, two in Brazil, two in Columbia, two in Peru, one in Madagascar, one in New Guinea, and others in India, Burma, and the Straits Settlements.

Being an orchid hunter meant pursuing beautiful things in terrible places. From the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth, when orchid hunting was in its prime, terrible places were really terrible places, and any man advertising himself as a hunter needed to be hardy, sharp, and willing to die far from home. The great orchid hunter William Arnold (who often worked for Sander) drowned during a collecting expedition on the Orinoco River. The hunter Schroeder fell to his death while hunting in Sierra Leone. The hunter Falkenberg was lost while orchid hunting in Panama. David Bowman died of dysentery in Bogotá. The hunter Klaboch died in Mexico. Endres was shot dead in Ríohacha. Gustave Wallis was murdered in Ecuador. Digance was gunned down by locals in Brazil. Osmers vanished without a trace. The linguist and plant collector Augustus Margary survived toothache, rheumatism, pleurisy, and dysentery while sailing the Yangtze, only to be murdered when he completed his mission and travelled beyond Bhamo, in Burma.

At the peak of the Victorian orchid fever, scores of orchid hunters were criss-crossing the world for different growers and collectors. The history of their expeditions was recorded informally, if at all. According to one version of one story, in 1863 a ship sailing to South America had among its passengers John Weir, of the Royal Horticultural Society; John Blunt, a hunter for a well-known collector named Hugh Low; and a hunter named Schlim, who was working for Frederick Sander's arch-rival, Jean Jules Linden, a distinguished Belgian nurseryman. All three men were heading for the same part of the Andes to search for the same odontoglossums, and each had promised his employer that he would be the first to bring the plants home. When men working for rival growers crossed paths, they sometimes killed each other, or at least came close.

Sometimes orchid species were discovered and brought back to Europe but then couldn't be found again in the wild. These were known as lost orchids, and every orchid fancier and every ambitious commercial grower and every prideful hunter was determined to find one of them. In the nineteenth century, *Cattleya labiata vera* was common in European greenhouses, but then, according to Tyler Whittle, an Anglican priest and the author of "The Plant Hunters," one by one the cattleyas mysteriously died until there was only a single plant left in all of Western Europe. No nurseryman or plant hunter could remember where the flower had originally been found. Then the greenhouse with the sole surviving specimen burned down. Hunters pined for the cattleya without luck for fifty years and eventually more or less abandoned the search for it. Then, one evening, a British diplomat spotted a woman at an embassy dinner in Paris with a corsage that reminded him of *Cattleya labiata vera*. He traced the flower to Brazil and confirmed that it was the lamented lost cattleya, and soon hunters were able to restock Europe's greenhouses. Most other lost orchids, though, have never been seen again.



In 1975, global traffic in wild orchids was outlawed by the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which is known as CITES. The treaty has now been signed by a hundred and forty-four countries, but it has not entirely ended the world trade in exotic plants and animals. Many smugglers ply their trade through the Port of Miami, which is one of the nation's biggest points of entry for contraband living things. The devices that smugglers use are manifold. In recent years, customs inspectors in Florida have arrested a woman trying to smuggle in a rare woolly monkey by hiding it in her overcoat, and a man wearing a vest with special pockets to carry his Australian-palm-cockatoo eggs, and a man carrying a toy Teddy bear stuffed with live tortoises, and a man with a live boa constrictor under his shirt, and a man with pygmy marmosets in his fanny pack. Inspectors have also found falcons hidden in milk cartons, parakeets tucked in hair curlers, monkeys under people's hats. Recently, they arrested a Venezuelan smuggler who had a bird-eating tarantula, two hundred baby tarantulas, and three hundred thumb-sized poison-arrow frogs in his carry-on bag. He also had fourteen juvenile boa constrictors in his pants. Orchids and other exotic plants are often smuggled from Asia to buyers in the United States. A few years ago, federal agents landed a catch of two thousand rare lady's-slipper orchids being illegally shipped into Miami from China. The federal government handed over the coveted plants to the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, in Sarasota, and after they arrived the director of Selby installed new locks in the orchid compound.

Domestic-plant crimes are common in Florida, too. Here are a few of the dozens I found on the Miami police blotter, in among the usual reports of assaults and stickups and stolen vehicles:

> April 30, 1992—Someone jumped the fence of a home in the 700 block of East 43rd Street Saturday afternoon and stole

several orchids. The plants were valued at more than $1000.

Feb. 6, 1992—Burglars attempted to enter a home in the 6500 block of West 27th Court sometime over the weekend but couldn't open the front door. Instead, they cut open a rear screen and stole eight orchids.

July 18, 1985—Frank Labate had $1800 worth of plants stolen from the patio of his home. Labate said he lost an eight-foot-tall palm tree, a six-foot white bird of paradise, a fern, six orchids, and two bonsai plants.

Sept. 2, 1984—More than $2000 worth of plants and patio furniture were taken from the backyard of Barry Burak. Burak reported 35 orchids totaling $1400, a $200 staghorn fern, 10 hanging plants totaling $150, five potted plants totaling $200, and three metal patio chairs totaling $150 missing.

May 6, 1984—Six show orchids, worth more than $700, were stolen from the backyard of Barbara Carter's house.

END-OF-CONSUMER-CONFIDENCE SALE

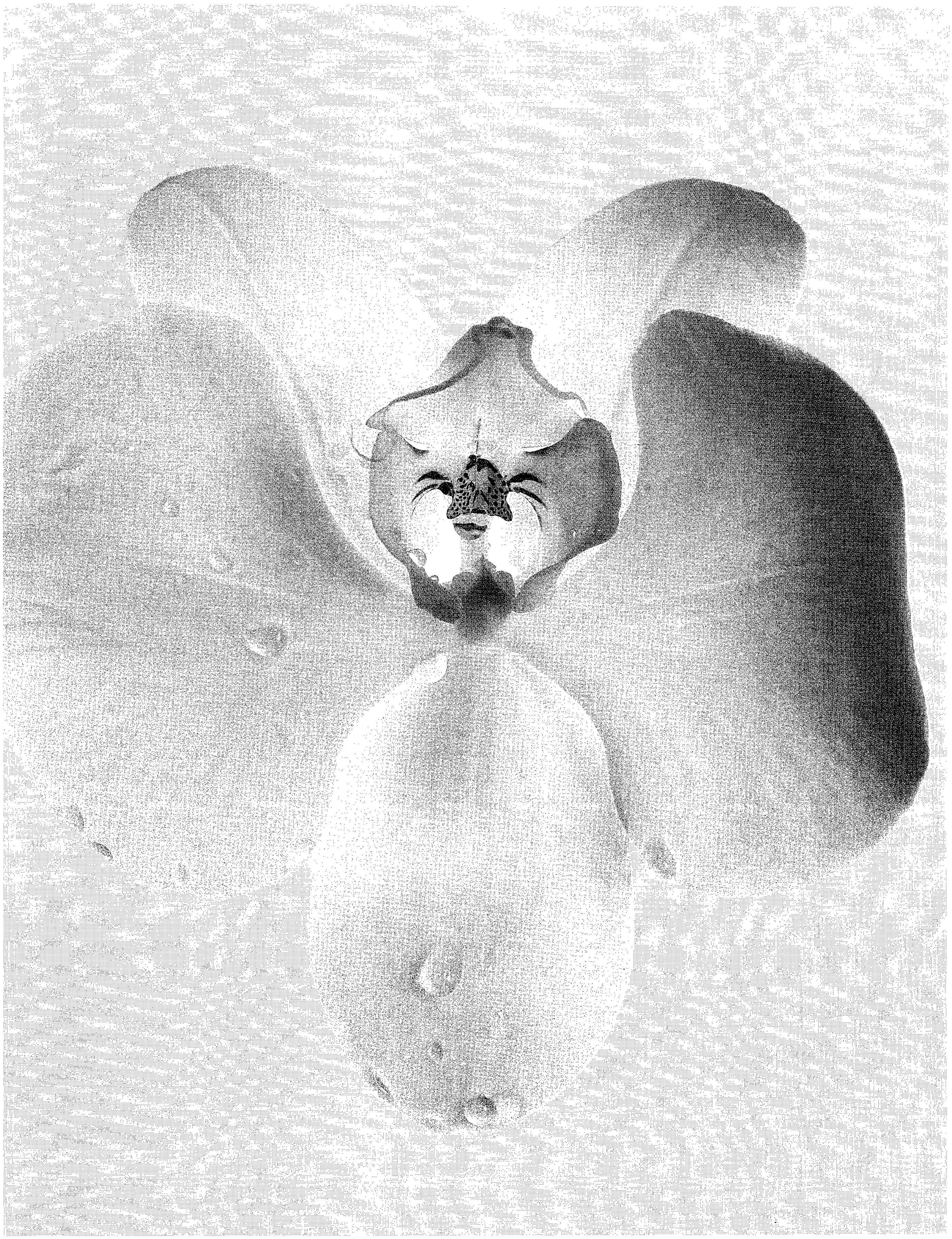
By contrast, the thievery that goes on in the bountiful wilderness areas of South Florida—the Everglades, the Big Cypress Swamp, the Loxahatchee Slough, and the Fakahatchee Strand—goes mostly unreported. Although it is illegal to take any plant or animal out of state or federal preserves, the Florida backwoods have been plundered for their botanical wealth since the day they were discovered. When the swamps were first being explored, orchid hunters, in the hope of protecting the plants, would sometimes refuse to say where they'd found new species. A prominent orchid grower who regularly explored the Fakahatchee—a swampy lowland preserve, near Naples, that is one of the richest orchid sites in the country—discovered *Bulbophyllum pachyrhachis* in Pond Apple Slough in 1956 but tried to keep the site secret. Eventually, though, collectors figured out where the cache was, and by 1962 they'd swept it clean.

The prettiest plant in the Fakahatchee is *Polyrrhiza lindenii*, known as the ghost orchid, which is a leafless species with a milk-white bloom, a lip as long and fluttery as the tail of a kite, and pale-green roots that form on tree bark the sort of starry pattern that you get when you throw a rock through a window. Ghost orchids are found in the United States only in the Fakahatchee, and they are now classified as endangered. It is illegal to collect them and it is also hopeless, because the plants rarely thrive outside the strand. Nevertheless, people will walk through the swamp for mile after miserable mile to find them.

THE orchid community in South Florida, which grows most of the commercial orchids for sale in the United States, is a tight, tangled world. Some nurseries have been in the same families for several generations. Everyone knows everyone else, and people have opinions about one another, about one another's flowers and greenhouses and techniques and families and fertilizers and letterheads and ethics and irrigation systems and personalities and talents and predilections. I didn't have to ask around the orchid community very long before I found someone who knew someone who had ghost orchids. I obtained an introduction through another grower to a woman named Savilla Quick, who was famous for having a lucky touch with Florida orchids.

Savilla has long, Cleopatra eyes and a button nose and a round, drawly voice. She told me that she had grown up west of Boynton Beach, when west of Boynton Beach was still nothing but cypress stands and acres of sawgrass. On Sundays, she used to go riding around the swamps looking for interesting things—in particular, leafless orchid species like the ghosts. At the time, it was still legal to collect wild orchids. She would bring the wild plants home and attach them to trees in her yard. That was decades ago. Since then, the woods west of Boynton Beach have disappeared, and Savilla has grown up, married twice, moved several times, had three children, and retired from her job as a lab technician, but the orchids she collected when she was young are still growing in her back yard.

Savilla invited me to her home, in Boynton Beach, to see her ghost orchids. I had to come right away, she told me, because she and her husband, Bob, were packing to go to Arkansas for the summer. From her dining room, I



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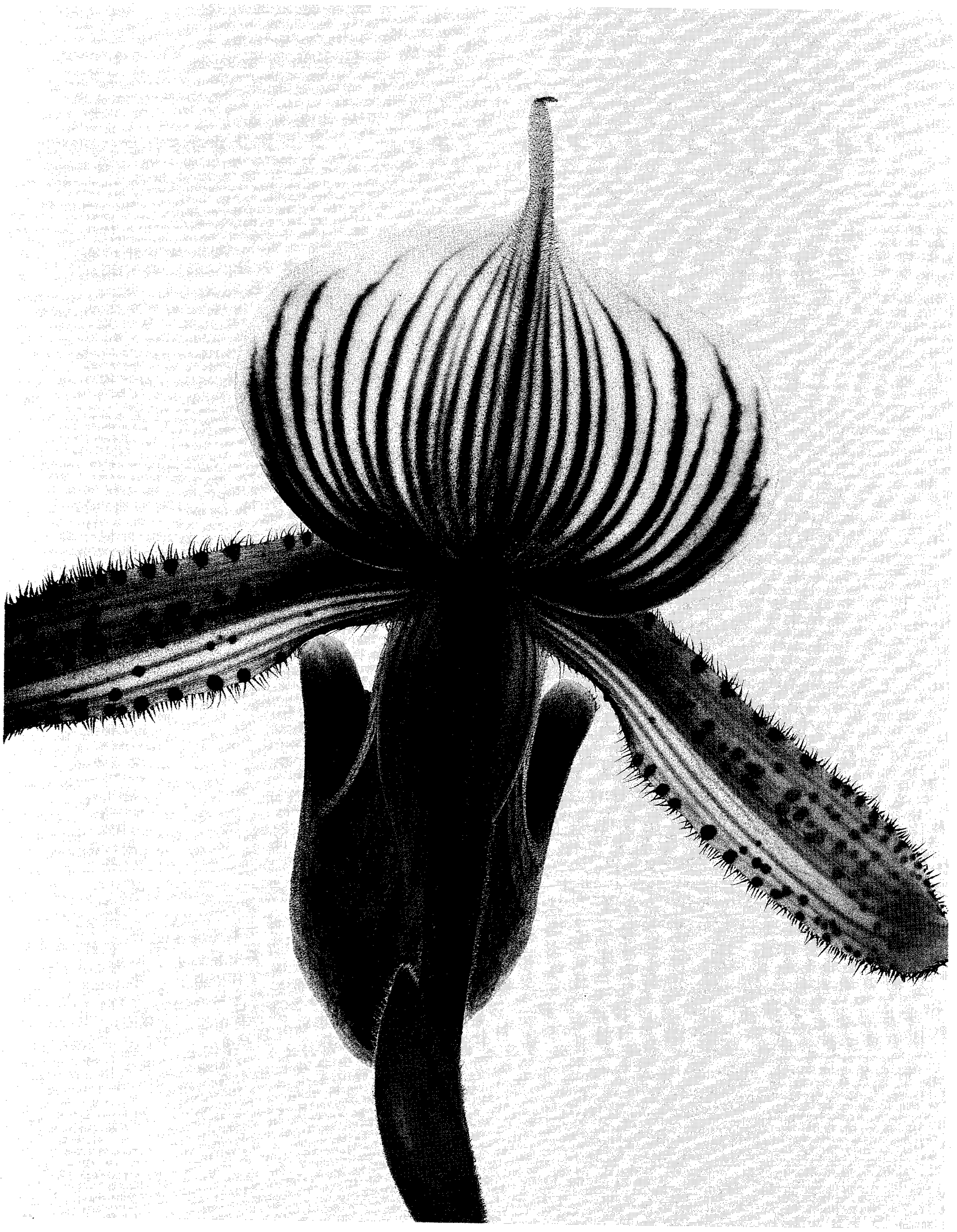
Phalaenopsis palm beach. Some discovered orchid species couldn't be found again in the wild. They became known as lost orchids.



Paphiopedilum Maudiae "Coloratum." Being an orchid hunter meant pursuing beautiful things in terrible places.

glanced out into her shade house, a kind of greenhouse made of wire mesh, perforated cloth, and clear plastic. It was about the size of a tractor-trailer and was bristling to the ceiling with plants. A little gust was pushing its hanging baskets around and rustling the green shade cloth and making pieces of a wind chime tick against each other with a lazy sound. When Savilla got off the phone, she rushed into the dining room and perched on the edge of a chair. "So, you want to know about the ghost orchids?" she asked. "Oh, I don't know! Should I really tell you my secrets? Oh, I suppose I should. It's good for the orchids, isn't it? Everybody's always trying to get my secrets out of me, because I'm one of the only ones who seem to be able to grow them."

Many people in the orchid world know about Savilla's success with ghost orchids, and she gets calls all the time from people who want to buy one of her plants. That week, she had already got a call from Tampa and a call from California. The woman in California had told Savilla that she was desperate for a ghost orchid and asked how much Savilla wanted for one. "I told her a hundred dollars," Savilla said. "Honestly, I could have said a thousand dollars! She had gobs of money! She said she was desperate! But I could tell she wanted it only so she could brag about it. I think it was just a statusy thing for her."

I asked her what she had decided to do.

She frowned and said, "I told her I'd call her if I had some seeds. I'll probably do that, but I bet a nickel I never give her one. I can tell she was one of those people who would love the orchid for a minute and end up letting it die."

Sometimes Savilla and Bob sell their surplus orchids at plant shows. At one of the shows, a man lingered at the Quicks' table and then struck up a conversation with Savilla. Maybe they talked about ghost orchids and maybe they didn't. Maybe he said he had a friend who wanted to buy one and maybe he didn't. The one certainty is that the man bought one little orchid from the Quicks and left. Two days later, the man called Savilla and said he wanted a few more orchids. "He'd been so sweet and so nice and so this and so that," she said. "That's why I let him come over to the house, even though he'd only bought one little bitty orchid at the sale." The man was especially curious about her ghost orchids, so she showed him a cluster of them on her mango tree. Most of them weren't blooming at the time, but one of the plants had started forming three seedpods—an infrequent and precious occurrence for an orchid, especially for a moody one like the ghost.

That evening, the man called Savilla and offered her a hundred dollars for one of those pods. She couldn't decide whether she should sell one, but the next day she called him and said she'd decided that she would, and then explained that the pods weren't ready to pick, so he couldn't have it quite yet. She said she would call him as soon as his pod was ready. She had his business card, which had only a post-office box instead of a regular address.

A few days later, Savilla went to check on the ghost-orchid seedpods. She walked over to the mango tree and bent down to take a look. Two of the pods were missing. The other was broken in two. Half of it was lying in the grass around the bottom of the tree. Savilla describes herself as an extremely emotional person. She says that she now wishes she hadn't let herself get so upset about the seedpods, but she did. She went berserk. Then she gathered the pieces of the broken pod and took them to the woman who germinates seeds for her, and the woman confirmed that the pod was ruined.

Savilla called the curious man for some sympathy. She asked him if he thought that his friend might have got impatient and come and stolen the seedpod. The curious man said that he was awfully sorry about the pods but that she'd misremembered: he hadn't been buying the pod for a friend; he wanted it for himself. He said some other ghost-orchid fancier must have heard that Savilla had seedpods and had stolen them.

Right after the pod theft, someone broke into the Quicks' shade house and stole almost three hundred plants, including twenty-three that were more valuable than beautiful—plants that only an orchid person could love. The Quicks installed video cameras in the shade house and an alarm system in the yard. Some time later, Savilla spotted the curious man at a plant show. It was the first time she'd seen him since the pods disappeared. She hardly recognized him, because he had completely changed his looks. "When I first met him, he was blondy-headed. This time, his hair was dark," Savilla said. "When I met him, he was wearing glasses, but now he had gone to contact lenses. And even his clothes had changed! He had been real casual when I met him, and when I saw him again he was in this sort of macho attire." They didn't speak; in fact, the curious man went out of his way not even to show Savilla his face.

Just then Savilla interrupted her story and said we should take a walk in the shade house. It was boiling hot outside. Savilla mentioned that her daughter had moved away from Florida and now lives in Anchorage, Alaska. We walked between the benches of plants, ducking to miss the hanging baskets of orchids. A turtledove was nesting in one of the baskets and watched us with its calm round eye, purring like a cat. The bird's tail had a neon-orange stripe on it that looked unnatural. "I did that," Savilla said, pointing to the bird. "I spray-painted the stripe on her when she first came to nest, because I wanted to keep track of the bird and see if she would return to her basket. With her stripe, now I won't mix her up with any other little bird."

We dallied. Savilla pointed out things she wanted me to see—a champion vanda, an iridescent fern, a frizzy little orchid she'd collected as a teenager. I loved all of them. The leaves on her plants were glossy and full, as if they'd been shampooed and conditioned. The late daylight made the pink and purple blooms look plushy and the red ones look like emergency flares. We walked under the purring turtledove and around the side of the house to the mango tree. The green roots of Savilla's ghost orchids were spread across the trunk. None of the plants were flowering, although one clump had a tiny raised pale-green bump, which Savilla said would be a flower in a month or two. I ran my fingers up and down the flat, rubbery orchid roots and up and down the nubbly mango bark, and then we went back into the house. Savilla opened a small file box and pulled out index cards on which she records information about all the wild plants she has collected. She handed me two cards. One said "Tiny Ghost *Harrisella porrecta* Collected Big Cypress," and the other said "*Polyrrhiza lindenii* Collected Big Cypress." These were the plants that were growing on her mango tree.

She put the index cards away and said that there was one last part of the seedpod story. It takes about eight months for orchid seeds to germinate, and eight months after her seedpods were stolen Savilla received a letter from the curious man. "It was around Christmastime," she said. "But it wasn't a Christmas card, it was just a note. I first thought it was awful strange to not even say 'Merry Christmas.' It just said, 'Dear Savilla, I hope you've gotten over the tragic loss of your seedpod. Call me when there's another.' Isn't that peculiar?"

Her theory is that, since she had hesitated before she agreed to sell the man a pod, he suspected that she would change her mind, so he decided to steal a pod before that happened. She figures that he sneaked into her yard one night, stole two pods, accidentally broke another, then tried to germinate the seeds, waited eight months, realized that the seeds weren't going to grow, and wrote Savilla a note just to seem nice and also to ply her for another seedpod. She never called him after she got the letter, but she kept his business card taped to one of her kitchen-cabinet doors. She asked around about him, and none of the orchid people she knows had ever heard of the man. She assumes that she will never hear from him again.

ONE of the most notorious plant crimes in Florida took place a few years before the theft of Savilla's seedpods—in June of 1990, when someone broke into a shade house at R. F. Orchids and stole a hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth of prize-winning orchids. Many of the stolen orchids were irreplaceable show plants, which had won the American Orchid Society's highest honors and were used as studs—big, vigorous specimens with de-luxe pedigrees which were bred and cloned. The break-in was big news among orchid growers and collectors because it was probably the biggest-ever orchid theft in Florida and maybe the biggest-ever in the United States, and it was definitely the biggest-ever theft of such special plants. The fact that it happened at R. F. Orchids made it even more newsworthy, because R. F. Orchids is one of the best and most successful nurseries in South Florida, and because the owner of R. F. Orchids, Robert Fuchs, attracts more opinions than most.

I met Bob a few years ago, the night before one of the annual South Florida orchid shows. At the time, he was about fifty and looked at least six feet tall, and he had a fit, husky, high-school-linebacker build. He was absolutely, completely, not tan. His hair was peach-colored and brushy, and he had a fluffy mustache and squinty blue eyes. He was the only person in the South Florida orchid world who had regularly been described to me as being very handsome. Everyone I met knew Bob Fuchs or knew of him. Some people said they considered him the king of the orchid world. Other people I asked would take deep breaths and release the air very slowly and then say that Bob was controversial. After a while, I began to see this as a polite way of saying that the person hated him, or, at the very least, that he made the person unhappily jealous.

I figured out right away why some people hated him: he is brassy and opinionated and has at times gone out of his way to be argumentative, and apparently his philosophy about orchid breeding is not everyone's cup of tea. The list of what is jealous-making about him is also long: he is from a family of Florida orchid aristocrats, his business is very successful, he wins a lot of awards, the public loves his flowers and loves his displays, he knows how to cultivate customers almost as well as he cultivates orchids. Or just go to his house! If you like flowers, or fluorescent-feathered exotic birds, or a perfect turquoise swimming pool with an orchid mosaic in the middle, or a pond with a waterfall and a special kind of dappled fish that flash

"For the last time—is this, or this not, the horse you rode in on?"

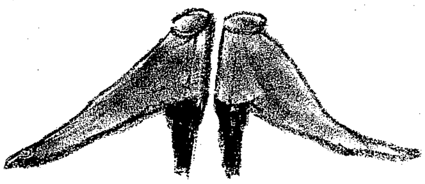
to the surface of the pond when you feed them, or a beautiful wooden grandstand where you can sit and watch the waterfall and the fish, or a dramatic, airy house filled with antique orchid porcelains and fine furniture and trophy heads of African game, or a front yard that opens onto a path leading to a pristine nursery filled with thousands and thousands of candy-colored flowers, you would probably like his house.

One afternoon, I went down to Homestead to see Bob, and he led me over to a grassy patch beside one of the shade houses where there was a huge chickee hut—the hut must have been as big as four hotel rooms—and we sat down at some kind of lovely table on some lovely chairs, and above us were a couple of ceiling fans going chuk-chuk-chuk as the blades flicked around, and the ice in our lemonade was clicking and sparkling, and behind Bob was a flow of green leaves and palm fronds and a blur of green in his shade houses, and above that green was the blank, blue Homestead sky, and from the west a breeze lifted and dropped pieces of Bob's blond hair like an idle shopper, and from behind us came the sound of cars grumbling over the gravel of his driveway and then sighing to a stop, and then came the clunk of an expensive car door opening and shutting, and then, not too long afterward, the chime of a cash register inside the shop, and for a long time I didn't want to say anything—I just wanted to sink into the greenness and the accidental melodies and the rich, hot laziness of the day. Bob finally started talking, and said he didn't know what made people so jealous of him, but at that moment, in that big, breezy chickee hut, with that green plushness all around us, I did.

Bob Fuchs's fame began in 1984, at the eleventh World Orchid Conference, which was held in Miami. World conferences take place every three years and have been staged in Glasgow, Tokyo, Honolulu, St. Louis, Singapore, Long Beach, and Auckland, among other cities. Miami has been host to the conference only once, and 1984 drew a record number of exhibitors, from Florida and from all over the world. The award for the best orchid that year went to *Vanda* Deva "Robert," owned by Bob Fuchs—a brilliant-red orchid with a small, blackish lip, and a speck of yellow in the center, and large petals that are tessellated with blood-colored veins. The award made Bob Fuchs a star, but it also marked the beginning of ill will between Bob Fuchs and another orchid man named Frank Smith.

After the spectacular win of *Vanda* Deva "Robert," Bob Fuchs decided to quit teaching junior high and go into the orchid business fulltime. He had already completed all the course work and student-judging requirements to become an accredited orchid judge in the Florida/Caribbean region. But when he applied to the American Orchid Society's judging committee his application was rejected. It was turned down, he was told, because Frank Smith had sent a letter to the committee charging Bob with having tried to bribe show judges by offering them cuttings from his best plants. Smith is a man of about Bob's age who has a well-known and successful Florida nursery of his own—Krull-Smith Orchids, which is in Apopka, near Disney World. He has also won many awards for his plants and is an accredited orchid judge, and in his letter he claimed that he was one of the judges whom Bob had tried to bribe.

When the big robbery took place at R. F. Orchids, the police investigated, but, they told Bob, because there were no witnesses and few clues, it was unlikely that the plants or the thief would ever be found. About two days after the break-in, an orchid hobbyist named Robert Perry was touring Florida orchid nurseries with his wife, and they stopped at Krull-Smith Orchids. While they were looking around, Perry noticed a bunch of exceptional-looking plants piled haphazardly in the back of a secluded shade house. Among them was a plant he fell in love with—a silvery-gray flower with a reddish-purple lip. Because of the way the plants were piled up, Perry couldn't reach the silvery orchid, but he could see it well enough to know that he had never seen anything like it. On the way out, he asked a nursery worker if he could buy a pup—an orchid baby—from the plant, but the worker told him that none of the plants in the pile were for sale.



A month later, as Perry was browsing through an old orchid magazine, he saw an R. F. Orchids ad featuring what looked like the silvery flower he'd seen at Krull-Smith. He knew that an orchid as special as that one was unlikely to be found at more than one nursery. He remembered having heard something or other about a robbery at R. F. Orchids. Perry had never met Bob Fuchs, but he decided to call him and tell him he'd seen what he thought was that same rare orchid at Krull-Smith. A few days later, a deputy sheriff, Perry, and Bob Fuchs and his business partner drove to Krull-Smith Orchids in the middle of the night. Perry led the men to the secluded shade house. It was now empty. The stack of plants, including that silvery one, was gone. Perry was dumbfounded. As the men were leaving, Bob's partner, Mike Coronado, wandered into another shade house. A moment later, he ran back to show the sheriff a plant tag from R. F. Orchids which he said he had found lying on the floor. The sheriff recorded all the information, but in the end there was not enough evidence to charge anyone with anything.

That fall and winter, someone started making threatening phone calls to several Florida orchid growers. Frank Smith claimed to have received a few of the calls in the course of several weeks. During the morning of February 20, 1991, he said he got two calls in an hour. The first call was answered by a friend of Frank's named Jane Daugherty, who was at the Krull-Smith office that morning feeding pet birds that belonged to her and Frank. According to her later testimony, the man on the phone told Jane Daugherty that if she cared about Frank Smith at all she should stop him from going to the 1991 Miami International Orchid Show, which was being held the following week. Then, she later testified, the caller identified himself as Bob Fuchs.

The next time the phone rang at Krull-Smith, Frank himself answered, and he later testified that he recognized Bob's voice, and that the caller threatened to harm him if he attended the Miami show. Smith said that the call scared him, because he knew Bob was

IN RATHER THAN OUT
OUT RATHER THAN IN

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angry about the letter that had wrecked his chances of becoming an orchid judge, and he also knew that Bob was still suspicious about the stolen plants. Frank was nevertheless determined to attend the four-day-long orchid show, so he hired two bodyguards to accompany him as he walked through the flower displays.

In Florida, the crime of telephone harassment is defined as more than one call placed in one day specifically to "annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any person." Since Frank Smith claimed to have received two calls in one day, Bob Fuchs was charged with second-degree-misdemeanor harassing communication, and on August 27, 1991, the case went to trial.

No one likes to talk about the case these days. When I listened to a tape of the proceedings, I discovered that the witnesses spent very little time talking about phone harassment or business competition. Instead, the trial became a speculative romance free-for-all. The prosecutor tried to show that Mike Coronado was in love with Bob Fuchs and therefore could not be trusted as a witness; Coronado dismissed the suggestion. Fuchs's attorney cross-examined Jane Daugherty, who had been feeding pet birds at Krull-Smith on the morning of the phone calls. Some of the birds were Frank's, she told the court, and the rest were hers. The defense counsel suggested that Daugherty was in cahoots with Frank Smith, since they were so intimate that even their birds commingled:

COUNSEL: Would it be fair to say you love Frank Smith?

DAUGHERTY: No sir, I'm a friend.

COUNSEL: No, you do not?

DAUGHERTY: I'm a good friend.

COUNSEL: A good friend. And you have no romantic connection with him whatsoever?

DAUGHERTY: No, sir.

COUNSEL: You don't travel with him?

DAUGHERTY: I help him put in orchid exhibits but I do not travel with him.

COUNSEL: Uh-huh. Well, how long has this . . . this mutual bird . . . hobby been going on?

DAUGHERTY: About six years.

COUNSEL: And you keep your birds at his place?

DAUGHERTY: I keep some of my birds at his place.

COUNSEL: Well, how many birds do you keep at his place?

DAUGHERTY: Approximately twenty-five of the English budgies are mine.

COUNSEL: You keep twenty-five of your personal birds at his place! Is this a business that you and he are in together?

DAUGHERTY: No, sir. This is a hobby.

COUNSEL: So you have a hobby, a mutual hobby with him that you devote . . . twenty-five of these birds that you keep with him, and you're just friends?

No one ever suggested that Robert Perry, the man who'd seen the plants mysteriously stashed in a corner at Krull-Smith and had then got in touch with Fuchs, was motivated by being in love with anything other than the silvery orchid. Bob Fuchs didn't testify. In closing arguments, both his attorney and the prosecutor admitted wearily that the history of suspicion between the two men was so enmeshed that it was hard to draw out any individual thread. Did Bob threaten Frank Smith because he was convinced that Smith had robbed his nursery? Did Frank Smith interfere with Bob's application to be an orchid judge out of jealousy or because he really knew Bob to be dishonest? Did Bob actually try to frame Smith for the robbery as revenge for his rejection by the judging committee?

The jury found Bob Fuchs not guilty, but the verdict didn't do much to clear things up. At the orchid show where I first met Bob Fuchs, I also met Frank Smith. He seemed pleasant and polite, but when I asked him to talk about the trial he looked at me as if my hair were on fire. He said that he didn't want to discuss the case at all, ever. He said the whole thing had come about because he'd been "talked into something" and that he had been "misled," and anyhow it was way in the past and everything was now all patched up. He agreed to talk to me about orchids sometime if I promised I wouldn't ask him about the case.

The feud between Fuchs and Smith lasted almost a decade. Probably no one except Bob and Frank will ever know what really happened, and it's possible that even they don't know exactly what did. Bob is now an accredited orchid judge in a different region of the country, and both he and Frank are continuing to do well in orchid shows. The plants that disappeared from Fuchs's nursery, including the one with the silvery flower, are still missing. As with all the world's lost or stolen or vanished orchids, people will undoubtedly continue to long for them, but they will probably never be found. ♦

FICTION

THE BUNCHGRASS EDGE OF THE WORLD

A girl without boys.

BY ANNIE PROULX

THE country appeared as empty ground, big sagebrush, rabbitbrush, intricate sky, flocks of small birds like packs of cards thrown up in the air, and a faint track drifting toward the red-walled horizon. Graves were unmarked, fallen house timbers and corrals burned up in old campfires. Nothing much but weather and distance, the distance punctuated once in a while by ranch gates, and to the north the endless murmur and sun-flash of semis rolling along the interstate.

In this vague region the Touheys ranched—old Red, ninety-six years young, his son Aladdin, Aladdin's wife, Wauneta, their boy, Tyler, object of Aladdin's hopes, the daughters, Shan and (the family embarrassment) Ottaline.

OLD RED, born in Lusk in 1902, grew up in an orphan home, a cross-grained boy—wrists knobby and prominent, red hair parted in the middle—and walked off when he was fourteen to work in a tie-hack camp. The year the First World War ended he was in Medicine Bow timber. He quit, headed away from the drought burning the West, drilled wells, prodded cattle in railroad stockyards, pasted up handbills, cobbled a life as though hammering two-bys. In 1930 he was in New York, shovelling the Waldorf-Astoria off the side of a barge into the Atlantic Ocean.

One salty morning, homesick for hard, dry landscape, he turned west again. He found a wife along the way and soon enough had a few dirty kids to feed. In Depression Oklahoma he bombed roosting crows and sold them to restaurants. When crows went scarce, they moved to Wyoming, settled a hundred or two miles from where he'd started.

They leased a ranch in the Red Wall country—log house, straggle of corrals that from a distance resembled dropped sticks. The wind isolated them from the world. To step into that reeling torrent of air was to be forced back. The ranch was adrift on the high plain.

There was the idea of running a few sheep, his wife's idea. In five years they built the sheep up into a prime band. The Second World War held wool prices steady. They bought the ranch for back taxes.

In August of 1946 a green-shaded lamp from Sears Roebuck arrived the same day the wife bore their last child. She named the kid Aladdin.

Peace and thermoplastic resin yarns ruined the sheep market and they went to cattle. The wife, as though disgusted with this bovine veer, complained of nausea as they unloaded the first shipment of scrubby calves. She stayed sick three or four years, finally quit. Red was a hard driver and of the six children only Aladdin remained on the dusty ranch, the giant of the litter, stubborn and abusive, bound to have everything on the platter whether bare bones or beefsteak.

Aladdin came back from Vietnam, where he flew C-123 Bs, spraying defoliants. Now he showed a hard disposition, a taste for pressing on to the point of exhaustion, then going dreamy and stuporous for days. He married Wauneta Hipsag on a scorching May morning in Colorado, the bride's home state. A tornado funnel hung from a green cloud miles away. Wauneta's abundant hair was rolled in an old-fashioned French knot. The wedding guests were her parents and eleven brothers, who threw handfuls of wheat, no rice available. During the ceremony, Wauneta's father smoked cigarette after cigarette. That evening at the Touhey ranch a few kernels of wheat shot from Aladdin's pants cuffs when he somersaulted off the porch, exuberant and playful before his new wife. The grains fell to the ground and in the course of time sprouted, grew, headed out, and reseeded. The wheat seized more ground each year until it covered a quarter-acre, the waving grain ardently protected by Wauneta. She said it was her wedding wheat and if ever cut the world would end.

WHEN he was twenty-six Aladdin wrenched the say of how things should go from old Red. Aladdin had been in the mud since blue morning digging out a spring. The old man rode up on his one-eyed mare. The son slung a shovelful of wet dirt.

"You ain't got it dug out yet?" the old man asked. "Not too swift, are you? Not too smart. Shovel ain't even sharp, I bet. How you got a woman a marry you I don't know. You must a got a shotgun on her. Must a hypatized her. Not that she's much, but probably beats doin it with livestock, that right?" The mud-daubed son climbed out of the hole, picked up clods, pelted his father until he galloped off, pursued him to the house, and continued the attack with stones and sticks of firewood snatched up from the woodpile, hurled the side-cutters he always carried in a back pocket, the pencil behind his ear, the round can filled not with tobacco but with the dark green of homegrown.

Red, knot-headed and bleeding, raised one arm in surrender, backed onto the porch. He was seventy-one then and called out his age as a defense. "I made this ranch and I made you." His spotted hand went to his crotch. Aladdin gathered can, pencil, and side-cutters, and put the old man's horse away. He went back to the spring, head down, picked up the shovel, and dug until his hands went nerveless.

Wauneta moved old Red's belongings out of the big upstairs bedroom and into a ground-floor room off the kitchen, once a pantry and still smelling of raisins and stale flour. A strip of adhesive tape held the cracked window glass together.

"You'll be closer to the bathroom," she said in a voice as smooth as gas through a funnel.

WAUNETA taught her two girls to carry pie on a white plate to their grandfather, kiss him good night, while Tyler played with plastic cows and stayed up late. One forenoon she came in from hanging clothes and found four-year-old Ottaline gripped astraddle over old Red's lap and squirming to get down. She ripped the child from him, said, "You keep your dirty old prong away from my girls or I'll pour boilin water on it."

"What? I wasn't—" he said. "Not—never did—"

"I know old men," she said.

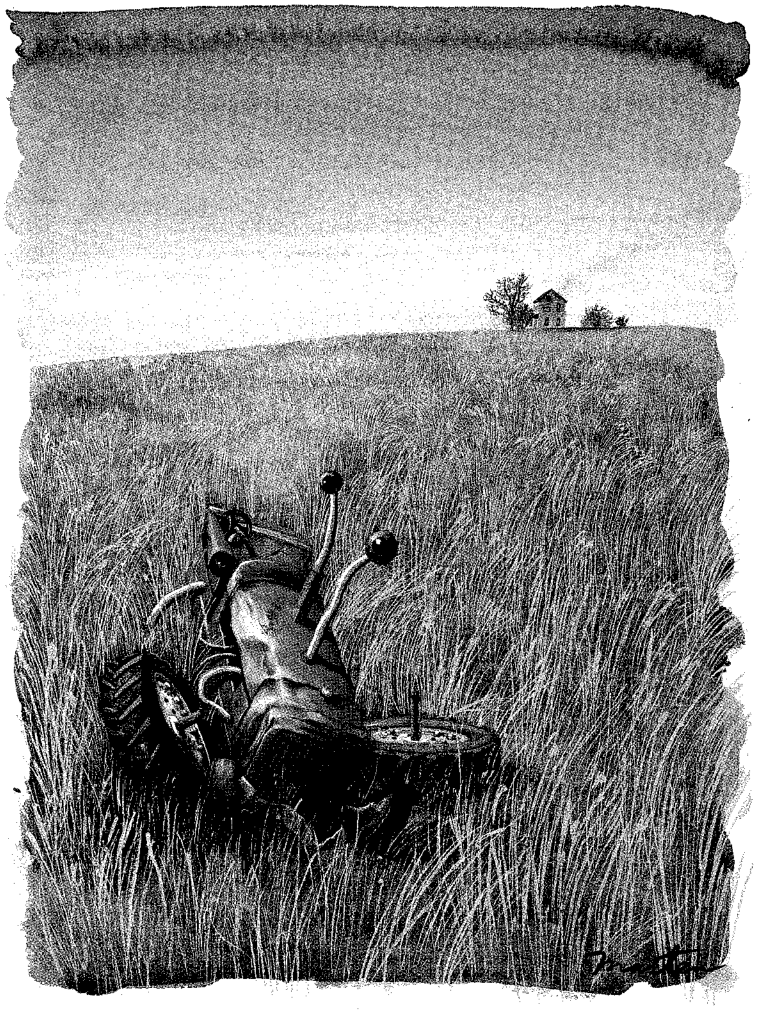
"Potty!" screamed Ottaline, too late.

Now she warned the daughters from him, spoke of him in a dark tone, fine with her to let him sit alone in the straight-backed chair, let him limp unaided from porch to kitchen to fusty room. The sooner he knocked on the pearly gates the better, she told Aladdin, who groaned and rolled to his side, fretted by the darkness that kept him from work, a quick-sleeping man who would be up at three, filling the kettle, opening the red coffee can, impatient to start.

"Wauneta, what a you want me a do about it?" he said. "Drown him in the stock tank? He will kick off one a these days."

"You been sayin that for five years. He is takin the scenic route."

Time counted out in calving; first grass; branding; rainfall; clouds; roundup; the visit from old Amendinger the cattle buyer; shipping; early snow; late blizzard. The children grew up. Aladdin got an old Piper Cub, swapping it for two bulls, a set of truck tires, a saddle, the rusted frame and cylinder of an 1860 Colt .44 he'd found at the root of a cedar. Wauneta's sandy hair grayed and every few months she went into the bathroom and gave it a maroon color treatment. Only old Red watched the progression of dates on his little feed-store calendar. He was older than kerosene now and strong to make his century.



The only man had chopstick legs and wore a T-shirt that said "Aggressive by Nature, Cowboy by Choice."

SHAN, the younger daughter, graduated from high school, moved to Las Vegas. She took a job in the package-design department of a manufacturer of religious CDs, quickly grasped the subtleties of images: breaking waves, shafts of sunlight denoted godly favor, while dark clouds with iridescent edges, babies smiling through tears represented troubles that would soon pass with the help of prayer. Nothing was hopeless and the money came in on wheels.

Ottaline was the oldest, distinguished by a physique approaching the size of a propane tank. She finished school a year behind her younger sister, stayed home. She plaited her reddish-pink hair in two braids as thick as whip handles. In conversation a listener would look back and forth between the pillowy, dimpled mouth and crystal-crack blue eyes and think it a pity she was so big. The first year at home she wore gaily colored XXL skirts and helped out around the house. But her legs were always cold and she suffered from what Wauneta called "minstrel problems," a sudden flow that sent her running for the bathroom, leaving a trail of dark, round blood spots behind her varying in size from a dime to a half-dollar. After bare-legged wades through snow, after scaly chilblain, she gave up drafty skirts and housework, changed to ranch chores with Aladdin. Now she wore manure-caked roper boots, big jeans, and T-shirts that hung to her thighs.

"Yes, keep her out a the house," said Wauneta. "What she don't break she loses and what she don't lose she breaks. Her cookin would kill a pig."

"I hate cookin," said Ottaline. "I'll help Dad." It was a fallback position. She wanted to be away, wearing red sandals with cork soles, sitting in the passenger seat of a pearl-colored late-model pickup, drinking from a bottle shaped like a hula girl. When would someone come for her? She was not audacious, not like her younger sister. She knew her appalling self and there was no way to evade it.

Aladdin saw she was easy with the stock, where the boy Tyler whooped and whistled and rode like a messenger reporting a massacre.

"Had my way, ever hand'd be a woman. A woman got a nice disposition with animals." He intended the remark to sting.

"Oh, Daddy," said Tyler in comic falsetto. He was the horseman of the family, had slept out in the dilapidated bunkhouse since he was thirteen, Wauneta's edict.

"My brothers slept in the bunkhouse." There was in that flat remark all of Wauneta's childhood, sequestered, alert, surrounded by menace.

This only son, Tyler, was a huge, kit-handed youth of nineteen stout enough to frighten any father except Aladdin. The kid stamped around in dirty jeans and a brown hat. He was slack-mouthed in rev-

RUTH MARTEN

erie, sported a young man's cat-fur mustache, cheeks marred by strings of tiny pimples. He was only one per cent right about anything, alternated between despondency and quick fury. On Aladdin's birthday Tyler presented him with two coyote ears, the result of weeks of cunning stalk. Aladdin unwrapped them, laid them on the tablecloth, and said, "Aw, what am I supposed a do with two coyote ears?"

"By God," screamed Tyler, "set one a them on your dick and say it won a fur hat in the church raffle. You are all against me." He swept the ears to the floor and walked out.

"He will be back," said Wauneta. "He will be back with dirty clothes and his pockets turned inside out. I know boys."

"I was the wanderin boy," old Red mumbled. "He won't be back. Takes after me. I cowboyed. I killed hogs. I made it through. Worked like a man since I was fourteen. Ninety-six years young. Never knowed my father. Carry you all to hell and spit on you." His finger dragged across the tablecloth, the long-ago self making a way. The old man showed a terrible smile, fumbled with his can of snoose.

ALADDIN, face like a shield, curly hair springing, tipped his head toward the tablecloth, mumbled, "O bless this food." Heavy beef slices, encircled by a chain of parsnips and boiled potatoes, slumped on the platter. He had discovered two long-dead cows that afternoon, one bogged, the other without a mark of cause. He lifted a small potato and transferred it to his father's plate without looking at him, ignored the rattling of the old man's fork, though Wauneta, pouring coffee into heavy cups, frowned, and said, "Watch it, John Wayne." A pastel envelope lay between her knife and a flat cake with sugar icing so thin it appeared blue.

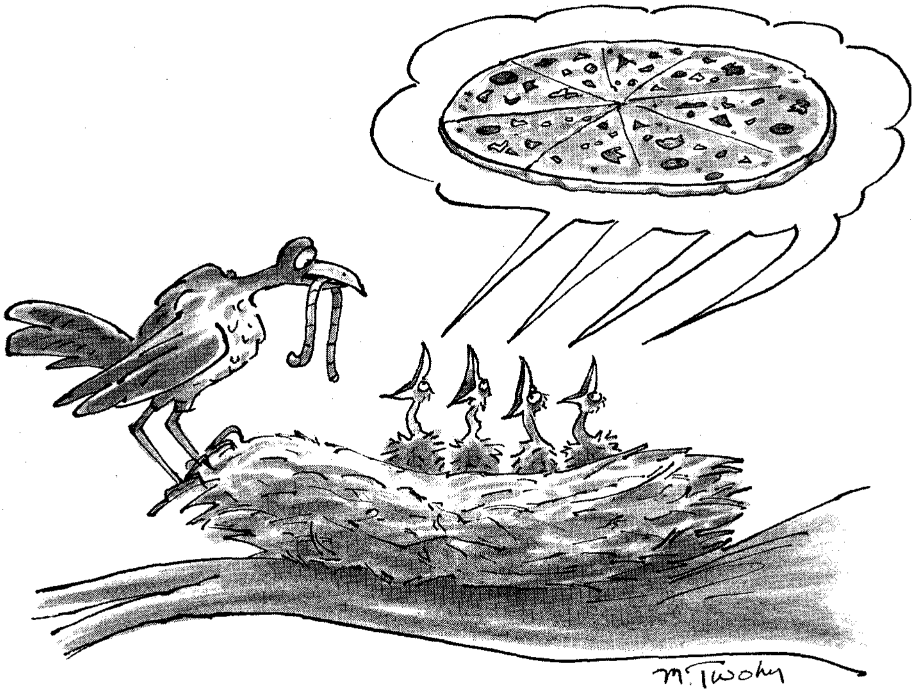
"Somethin come from Shan."

"She comin back?" Aladdin crushed his potatoes, flooded them with skim milk. Game and Fish would pay for stock killed by grizzlies or lions. He had not seen lion sign for a decade and grizzly, never.

"Didn't open it yet," she said, tearing the end. There was a short and vague letter that she read aloud and, clipped to it, an astonishing photograph. It showed his daughter in a black bikini, greased muscles starkly outlined, exhibiting bulging biceps and calves, spiky crewcut hair whitened with bleach, her rolling, apricot-size eyes frozen wide open. In the letter she had written, "Got into bodybuilding. Alot of girls here do it!"

"Whatever she has done to her hair," said Wauneta, "somebody talked her into it. I know Shan and that would not be her idea." When Shan left she had been an ordinary young woman with thin arms, blondish chew-ended hair. Her glancing unlevel eyes ricked from face to face. When she spoke, her hands revolved, the fingers flung out. The yearbook had named her "most animated."

"Bodybuildin." Aladdin's tone was neutral. He had the rancher's expectation of disaster, never believed in happy endings. He was satisfied that she was alive, not building bombs or winking at drive-by johns.



Ottaline stared at her coffee. Floating on the surface was a spread-wing moth the shape of a tiny arrowhead. It pointed at her sister's empty chair.

ALADDIN wore boots and a big hat but rarely mounted a horse. He missed the Piper Cub, which had seemed to him very like a horse. Someone had stolen it two years earlier, had unbolted the wings and hauled it away on a flatbed while he slept. He suspected Mormons. Now he was welded to the driver's seat of his truck, tearing over the dusty roll of land, and sometimes, drugged and fallen, he spent the night out in a draw, cramped on the front seat. The windshield glass, discolored by high-altitude light, threw down violet radiance. He had made the headache rack from poles cut on the ranch. He kept a bottle of whiskey, a rope behind the seat. The open glove compartment carried kindling, wrenches, bolts and nuts, several hundred loose fence staples, and a handleless hammerhead. Wauneta tossed an old quilt in the cab and told him to wind up the windows when it rained.

"I know you," she said. "You will let the weather get you."

Every ten days or so Ottaline reared up and said she wanted to go to town and look for a job. Aladdin would not take her. Her weight, he said, ruined the springs on the passenger side. Anyway, there were no jobs, she knew that. She had better stay on the ranch where she didn't know how good she had it.

"I don't know why you would want a leave this ranch."

She said he should let her drive in alone.

"I will tell you when I am ready for advice," he said. "I am steerin my own truck for now. If you want a drive a truck then buy one."

"I am about a million dollars short." It was all hopeless.

"What a you want me a do, rob a bank for you?" he said. "Anyway, you're comin a the bull sale. And I'll give you a pointer you don't want a forget. Scrotal circumference is damn important."

WHAT was there for Ottaline when the work slacked off? Stare at indigo slants of hail forty miles east, regard the tumbled clouds like mechanics' rags, count out he loves me, he loves me not, in nervous lightning crooked as branchwood through all quarters of the sky.

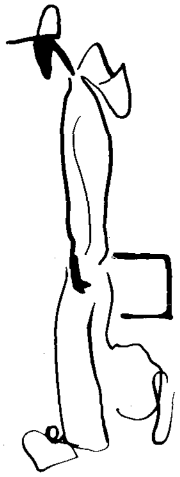
That summer the horses were always wet. It rained uncommonly, the southwest monsoon sweeping in. The shining horses stood out on the prairie, withers streaming, manes dripping, and one would suddenly start off, a fan of droplets coming off its shoulders like a cape. Ottaline and Aladdin wore slickers from morning coffee to good-night yawn. Wauneta watched the television weather while she ironed shirts and sheets. Old Red called it drip and dribble, stayed in his room chewing tobacco, reading Zane Grey in large-print editions, his curved fingernail creasing the page under every line. On the Fourth of July they sat together on the porch watching a distant storm, pretending the thick, ruddy legs of lightning and thunder were fireworks.

Ottaline had seen most of what there was to see around her with nothing new in sight. Brilliant events burst open not in the future but in the imagination. The room she had shared with Shan was a room within a room. In the unshaded moonlight her eyes shone oily white. The calfskin rug on the floor seemed to move, to hunch and crawl a fraction of an inch at a time. The dark frame of the mirror sank into the wall, a rectangular trench. From her bed she saw the moon-bleached grain elevator and behind it immeasurable range flecked with cows like small black seeds. She was no one but Ottaline in that peppery, disturbing light that made her want everything there was to want. The raw loneliness then, the silences of the day, the longing flesh led her to press her mouth into the crook of her own hot elbow. She pinched and pummelled her fat flanks, rolled on the bed, twisted, went to the window a dozen times, heels striking the floor until old Red in his pantry below called out, "What is it? You got a sailor up there?"

Her only chance seemed the semiliterate, off-again, on-again hired man, Hal Bloom, tall legs like chopsticks, T-shirt emblazoned "Aggressive by Nature, Cowboy by Choice." He worked for Aladdin in short bursts between rodeo roping, could not often be pried off his horse (for he cherished a vision of himself as an eighteen-seventies cowboy just in from an Oregon cattle drive). Ottaline had gone with him down into the willows a dozen times, to the damp soil and nests of stinging nettles, where he pulled a pale condom over his small, hard penis and crawled silently onto her. His warm neck smelled of soap and horse.

But then, when Ottaline began working on the ranch for hard money, Aladdin told Hal Bloom to go spin his rope.

"Yeah, well, it's too shit-fire long a haul out here anyways," Bloom said, and was gone. That was that.



Ottaline was dissolving. It was too far to anything. Someone had to come for her. There was not even the solace of television, for old Red dominated the controls, always choosing Westerns, calling out to the film horses in his broken voice, "Buck him off, kick his brains out!"

Ottaline went up to her room, listened to cell-phone conversations on the scanner.

"*The balance on account number seven three five five nine is minus two hundred and oh four. . . .*"

"*Yes, I can see that, maybe. Are you drinkin beer already?*" "*Ha-ha. Yes.*"

"*I guess maybe you didn't notice.*" "*It wasn't all smashed flat like that, all soft. I took it out of the bag and it was—you goin a carve it?*" "*Not that one. It's nasty.*"

"*Hey, is it rainin there yet?*"

"Is it rainin yet?" she repeated. It was raining everywhere and people were alive in it except in the Red Wall country.

The low sun poured slanting light under the edge of a cloud mass so dark it seemed charred, the prairie, the tractors, her hand beyond the wrist hem of the yellow slicker, all gilded with saffron brilliance. Colors of otherworld intensity blazed in the washed air, the distant Red Wall a bed of coals.

"Sweet," the voice breathed.

She was alone, there were no alien spacecraft in the sky. She stood quite still. She had eaten from a plateful of misery since childhood, suffered avoirdupois, unfeeling parents, the hard circumstances of the place. Looniness was possible, it could happen to anyone. Her mother's brother Mapston Hipsag had contracted a case of lumpy jaw from the stock and the disease took him by stages from depressive rancher to sniggering maniac. The light glided down to a dying hue and the wrecked machines sank into their own coffee-brown shadows. She heard nothing but mosquito whine, small wind that comes with approaching darkness.

That night, listening to the ramble of talk on the scanner, she wondered if hunger had prompted an invisible voice, went to the kitchen, and ate all of the leftover pork roast.

"*I'm worried about you. I hope nobody tries to kill you or something.*" "*Don't miss me too much.*"

"*Nothin been hit.*" "*It just rained like a bastard up here.*" "*Rained like shit, here too.*" "*No point stayin here.*"

OTTALINE studied Shan's photograph, said to her mother, "If it kills me I am goin a walk it off."

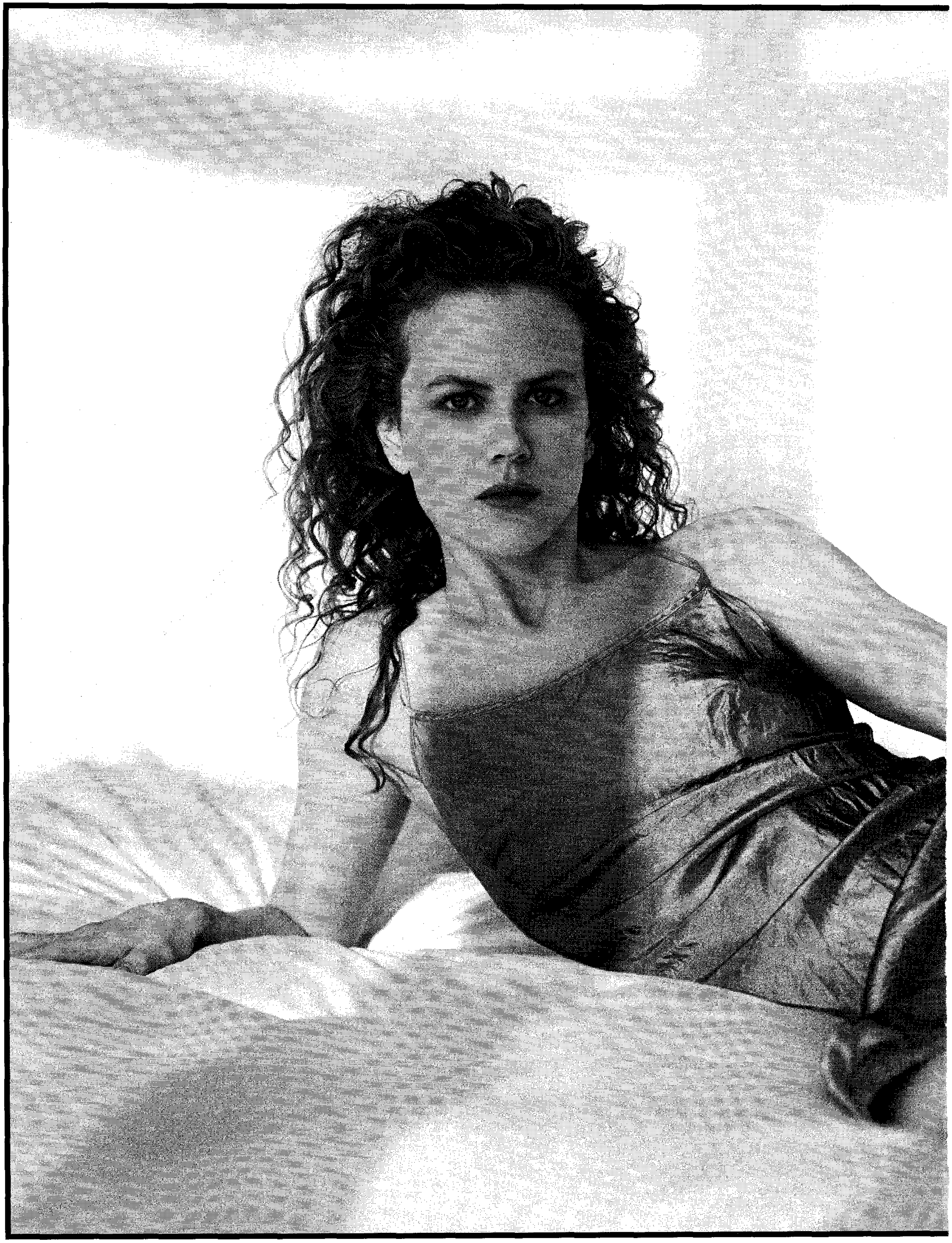
"Haven't I heard that before?" said Wauneta. "I know you."

Ottaline marched around outside the house for a few days, then widened the loop to take in the corrals, the toolshed, the root cellar, circumambulated the defunct gravel quarry where Aladdin dragged worn-out equipment, a sample of tractors, one a 1928 blue Rumely OilPull tractor on steel with a chokecherry tree growing through the frame, beside it old Red's secondhand 1935 AC with the four-cylinder overhead valve engine, paint sunscalded white. Half buried at the foot of a caving bank lay the remains of a stripped Fordson Major, grille and radiator shroud smashed in, and next to a ruined stock tank stood the treacherous John Deere 4030.

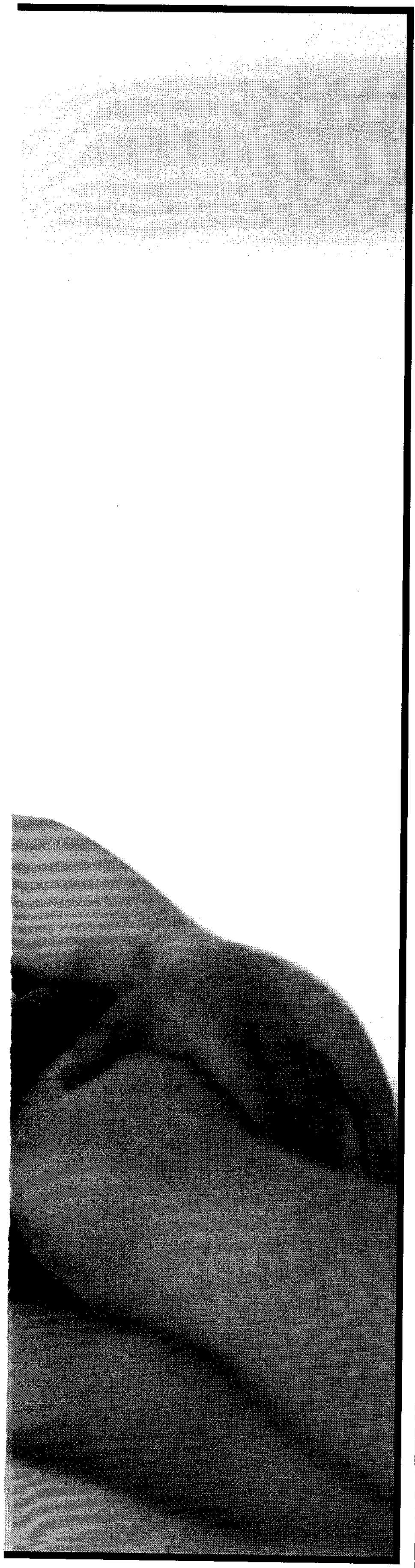
She was walking through the rain-slicked wrecks when a voice spoke, barely audible. "Sweetheart, lady-girl."

NOTHING happened for weeks, common enough in that part of the state. On a roaring noon she went again to the gravel pit.

"Hello, sweetheart. Come here, come here." It was the 4030, Aladdin's old green tractor, burly but with forward-raking lines that falsely indicated an eagerness to run. The machine had killed a ranch hand years earlier in a rollover accident at the weed-filled irrigation ditch—Maurice Ramblewood, or what? Rambletree, Bramblefood, Rumbleseat, Tumbleflood? She was a kid but he always flashed her a smile, asked her what was cooking, and on the fatal day tossed her a candy bar, pliable and warm from his shirt pocket, said she could borrow his sunglasses that turned the world orange. In late afternoon he was dead in



BRIT CRIX CAUSE TIX BLITZ *Nicole Kidman's turn in "The Blue Room," David Hare's adaptation of Schnitzler's sex pla from the London press ("Pure theatrical Viagra"—Daily Telegraph), so good seats are a tough get for the Gotham transfe*



.a Ronde," inspired a surfeit of sauciness is week. Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

bristle grass and spiny clotbur. His ghost.

"Maurice? That you?"

"No. No. It ain't him. That boy's a cinder."

"Who is talkin?"

"Two steps closer."

She stretched out her hand to the side grille. Yellow jackets had built a nest in it and were creeping in and out of the grille's interstices, palping the air suspiciously. She stared fixedly at the insects.

"That is good," said the voice inside the tractor. "Get you a little stick and scratch where all that paint is blistered up." But she backed off.

"I'm just scared to pieces," she said, looking at the sky, the rise and fall of crested prairie, the bunchgrass edge of the world that flared like burning threads.

"Naw, now, don't be. This old world is full a wonders, ain't it? Come on, get up in the cab. Plenty a bounce left. The seat's still good. Pretend you're drivin right through L.A." The voice was hoarse and plangent, just above an injured whisper, a movie gangster's voice.

"No," she said. "I don't like this. I already got enough problems, not makin it worse by gettin in a old tractor cab that's ready to collapse."

"Aw, you think you got problems? Look at me, sweetheart, settin out here in the bakin sun, blizzards and lizards, not even a tarpolean over me, brakes wrecked, battery gone, workin parts seized up, no gas, surrounded by deadheads, covered with birdshit and rust. Here you are at last, won't even give me the time a day."

"It's six-twelve," she said and walked off, fingertips pressing her eyebrows. This was hallucination.

The voice called after her, "Sweetheart, lady-girl, don't go."

SHE craved to know something of the world, but there was only the scanner.

"Broken, threads stripped, had to take it up and get it welded. You know that fucker used a do that shit but he don't hang around here no more."

"—horns off the steers. I stopped by to see her." "Yeah? They told me you left before three." "I was there at three to change my clothes." "You know you're full a bullshit."

"It's fuckin pourin here, man." "I don't know what else. It was like— Whoa! Oh my God that was a big lightnin! Whoa! I got a get off the fuckin phone."

"I want a be with you, but I look at reality and I say to myself this fuckin woman wants a fuck everbody, I can't even get it on the couch, got a go in the fuckin bedroom." "Yeah, it's all my fault, right?"

It made her sick, it made her jealous to hear those quarrelsome but coupled voices.

SHE went again to the gravel pit. The choking rasp began when she was twenty feet distant.

"Maurice Stumblebum? Just forget him. Wrench your steerin wheel, jam the brakes, rev, rev, rev. Never change oil or filter, never check brake fluid, never got the ballast right, didn't bother a check the front-wheel toe-in, used a ride the clutch unmerciful, run in heavy mud and never think a the front wheel bearins. They're ground a dust. Jump around in the seat until it made me crazy. Aw, don't drum your fingers like that, take me serious."

She looked away to the Red Wall, something best kept at a distance. It was not a place to go. The distant highway flashed, the reflection from a bottle pitched out of a tourist's car.

"But that ain't why I killed him."

"Then why?"

"Over you," said the tractor. "Over you. I saved you from him. He was goin a get you."

"I could a saved myself," she said, "if I'd a wanted to."

AT supper Wauneta opened a pink envelope from Shan.

"What I thought," she said. "I knew it. I knew Tyler'd show up." Shan wrote that Tyler had been living with her and her roommate for a month, that he was trying for a job with the BLM rounding up wild horses and, while he waited to hear, holding down a telephone job for a bill collector. He had bought himself a computer and in the daytime seemed to be studying electronics—the table was covered with bits of wire and tape and springs when she came home from the gym. They had become vegetarians, except Tyler, who ate shrimp and crab legs, foods he had never tasted until Las Vegas. He could not get enough of them. He had, wrote Shan, spent sixty-five dollars for a four-pound box of jumbo shrimp, had cooked and eaten them in solitary gluttony. "Ha-ha, not much has changed. He is still a pig," the letter ended.

Aladdin put a parsnip on old Red's plate.

"Shrimps'll make your pecker curl," said the old man. "Sounds like he's buildin a bomb with them wires."

"He's not doin no such thing," said Wauneta.

After supper Ottaline scraped the

dishes, began to snivel. Wauneta slung her hip against her, put her arm around the soft shoulders.

“What are you cryin about? That weight not comin off? Make up your mind to it, you are one a them meant to be big. My mother was the same.”

“Not that. It seems like somebody is makin fun a me.”

“Who? Who is makin fun a you?”

“I don’t know. Somebody.” She pointed at the ceiling.

“Well, let me tell you, that Somebody makes fun a everbody. Somebody’s got a be laughin at the joke. Way I look at it.”

“It’s lonesome here.”

“There’s no lonesome, you work hard enough.”

Ottaline went upstairs, set the scanner to rove and seek.

“Please enter your billing number now. I’m sorry, you have either misdialled or dialled a billing number we cannot accept. Please dial again.”

“Why would it do that?” “Turn it off, turn it off.”

“Hey, git doughnuts. And don’t be squirtin around with twelve of em. Git a bunch. Don’t be squirtin around, git two boxes.”

“If that’s fuckin all you have to say—then dang!”

EVERY day the tractor unloaded fresh complaints, the voice rough and urgent.

“Lady-girl, your daddy is a cocklebur. Get up and he don’t get down. Stay in the seat sixteen hours. Aw, come here, I want to show you somethin. Look to the left a the cowl there, yeah, down there. What do you see?”

“Patch a rust. Big patch a rust.”

“That’s right. A big patch a rust. I won’t tell you how that got there. I don’t like to tell a girl somethin bad about her daddy. But in all the years I worked for your daddy I only once had a sweet day and that was the day I come here straight off the dealer’s yard, fourth-hand and abused, and you was ten years old, your birthday. You patted me and said, ‘Hello, Mr. Tractor.’ Your daddy put you up in the seat, said, ‘You can be the first one a sit there,’ and your little hand was sticky with frostin and you wiggled around in the seat and I thought—I thought it was goin a be like that ever day and it never happened again, you never touched me again, never come near me, just that damn bony-assed Maurice couldn’t be bothered a use the rockshaft lever, I got him with hydraulic oil under pressure, he got a infection. And your dirty dad. Broke my heart until now. But I’ll tell you the truth. If your daddy was a get up here today I would hurt him for what he done a my brake system. I will tell you sometime about the beer and what he done with it.”

“What?”

“I’d tell you, but I think it would disgust you. I won’t turn a lady-girl against her family. I know you’d hold it against me and I don’t want that. Tell you some other time.”

“You tell me now. Don’t go around talkin blah-blah. I hate that.”

“All right. You asked for it. Stumblebum never bothered a check nothin. Finally brake fluid’s gone. I’m out there with your daddy, on the slope, we was haulin a horse trailer. He’s got his old six-pack with him, way he drinks he’s alcoholic. He mashes his foot on the brake and we just keep rippin. No way he could stop me, not that I wanted a stop. I didn’t care. Slowed only when we come at a rise. He jumped off before the rollback, kicked a rock under a back wheel. What he done—poured warm beer in my master-brake-cylinder reservoir, pumped that beer down the brake lines. Yeah, he got enough pressure. But it ruined me. That’s why I’m here. You hate me for tellin you, don’t you?”

“No. I heard a worse crimes. Like killin somebody in a ditch.”

“You goin a pout?”

ANOTHER day she stormed out to the gravel pit.

“Shut up,” she said. “Don’t you see I’m fat?”

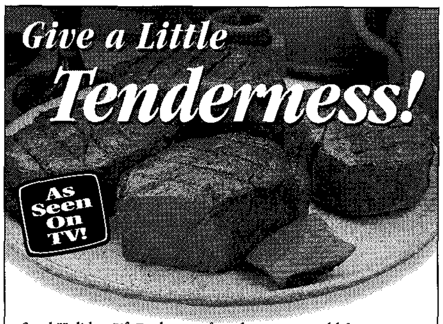
“What I like.”

“Why don’t you fix your attentions on another tractor? Leave me alone.”

“Now, think about it, lady-girl. Tractors don’t care nothin about tractors. Tractors and people, that’s how it is. Ever tractor craves some human person, usually ends up with some big old farmer.”

“Are you like an enchanted thing? A damn story where some girl lets a warty old toad sleep in her shoe and in the mornin the toad’s a good-lookin dude makin omelettes?”

“Naw. I could tell you they had a guy work at Deere a few years ago got fired out a the space program for havin picnics with foreigners and drinkin vodka but they couldn’t prove nothin. He was cross-wired about it. It was around when they started foolin with computers and digital tapes. Remember them cars that told you to shut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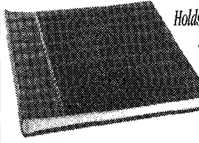
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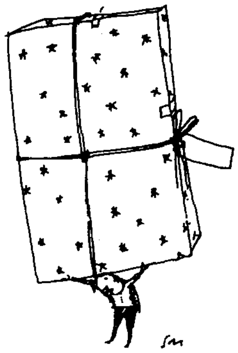
the door? Like that. Simple. Computers. He worked me up, fifteen languages. I could tell you that. Want a hear me say somethin in Urdu? Skivelly, skavelly—"

"You could tell me that, but I would not believe it. Some lame story." And it seemed to her that the inbuilt affection for humans the tractor harped on was balanced by vindictive malevolence.

"That's right, I was lyin."



"You got any kind a sense," she said, "you'd know people don't go crazy over tractors."

"Where you're wrong. Famous over in Iowa, Mr. Bob Ladderrung got himself buried with his tractor. Flat-out loved each other, he didn't care who knew it. And I don't just mean Iowa farmers. There's fellas can't keep away from us. There's girls fell in love with tractors all over this country. There is girls married tractors."

"I'm goin in," she said, turning away. "I'm goin in." She looked at the house, her mother's wedding wheat swaying yellow, old Red's face like a hanging skull in the window. "Oh, please," she said to herself, weeping, "not a tractor or nothin like it."

After supper, in her room, she wished for a ray gun to erase the brilliant needles of light from the isolate highway, silence the dull humming like bees in a high maybush. She wanted the cows to lie down and die, hoped for a tornado, the Second Coming, violent men in suits driving a fast car into the yard. There was the scanner.

"You think he's normal until you start to talk to him."

"I should a called the police, as mean and horrible as he is, but I'm not goin a do that. And this is what I'm thinkin. I'm goin a go after him even though we haven't been married that long. He's goin a pay. He's got it! He's makin two thousand a month. Anyway, I got a headache every day a my life over this. But I'm fine. Just a little insane. Don't worry, I'm fine."

ALADDIN lifted a wad of turnip greens from the bowl, lowered it onto Ottaline's plate.

"What are you doin out there in the gravel pit with them tractors? I was lookin for you half a hour."

"Thinkin," she said, "of maybe try a fix up that Deere. Like just mess around with it." That day she had climbed up into the cab, sat on the seat, feeling an awful thrill.

"I wouldn't spend a dime on that damn thing. It never run good."

"I'd spend my own money on parts. I don't know, maybe a foolish idea. Thought I might try."

"We had trouble with that machine from day one. Damn Maurice Gargleguts got done, it wouldn't go much. We hauled that thing to Dig Yant, he replaced some a the wirin, cleaned the fuel tank, blew out the gas line, ten other things, rebuilt the carburetor. Then somethin else went wrong. Ever time they fixed it, it'd blow up somewhere else. They give me a hot iron on that one. I went to raisin heck and the dealer finally admitted it was a lemon. Give me a real good deal on the Case. Now, that's a tractor that's held up. You know, that 4030, you will be strippin it down to grit." He ate his meat loaf. He thought, said, "I could—might give you a hand. Haul it in that blue-door shed. Put a stove out there, run a pipe." He saw himself rising in the black wintry morning while his family slept, going out to the shed to stoke the fire, take a little smoke, and in the cozy warmth breaking loose rusty bolts, cleaning mucky fittings, pins, studs, screws, nuts soaking in a tub of kerosene while he waited for daylight and the start of the real day. "We'll get her in there tomorrow."

"Him," said Ottaline.

"You won't fix it," said old Red. "What you are tryin a fix ain't fixable."

"O.K.," she said, walking up to the tractor. "We are goin a move you into the blue-door shed and operate. My dad is goin a help me and you better stay hunderd per cent quiet or it's all over."

"You want a know my problems? Brakes. Belts shot, block cracked, motor seized, everthing rusted hard, sludge, dirt, lifters need replacin, water pump's shot, camshaft bearins shot, seals shot, magneto, alternator fried—you look inside that clutch housin you'll see a nightmare. Clutch plate needs a be relined, got a replace the tie-rod ends, the fuel shut-off line is bust, the steerin-gear assembly wrecked, the front axle bushings, spindle bushings all bananas and gone, you want a talk differential you'll be listin parts for fifteen minutes. The transmission clutch slipped bad before everthing went blank. I

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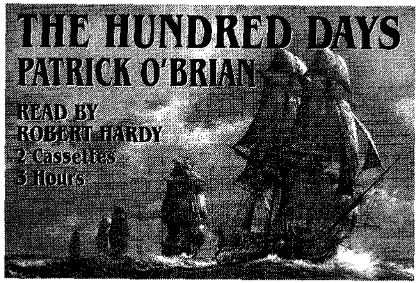

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don't want your dirty dad a work on me. He already done that and look at me."

"Different now. Anyway, goin a be mostly me. I'm doin this. What gears was that tranny clutch slippin in?"

"You? You don't know nothin about tractor repair. I don't want you workin on me. I want you should take me a Dig Yant—he's a tractor man. It's men that fixes tractors, not no woman. First and third."

"You don't got much choice. Tell you one thing, I didn't take home ec. I took mechanics and I got a B. First and third? Seal on the underdrive brake piston or more likely the disks bad worn." She had brought a can of penetrating oil with her and began to squirt it on studs, bolts, and screws, to rap on the rusted bolts with a heavy wrench.

"You make a wrong move I might hurt you."

"You know what? I was you I'd lay back and enjoy it." Something Hal Bloom had said.

THE rain quit in September and the prairie began to yellow out. There were a few heated days; then the weather cooled and an early storm hoop-rolled out of the northwest, slinging a hash of snow, before they got the tractor dismantled to frame, motor, and transmission.

"We got a get a engine hoist in here," said Aladdin, coughing. The first night of the storm he had got wasted and slept out in his pickup, window down, the snow carousing over him. He woke shuddering, drove home, heard they were out of coffee, drank a glass of cold water, told Wauneta he could not eat any breakfast. By noon he was feverish and strangling, took to the bed.

"That coughin drives me into the water and I don't swim," said old Red. "Better off just smother him, be done with it."

"There is somebody else at the top a my smotherin list," said Wauneta. "I knew this was goin a happen. Sleep in a truck." Aspirin, poultices, glasses of water, steam tent, hot tea were her remedies, but nothing changed. Aladdin roasted in his own dry heat.

"What's tomorrow," he said, rolling his aching head on the hot pillow.

"Friday."

"Bring me my calendar." With swimming eyes he studied the scrawled notes, called for Ottaline.

"She's out feedin. It snowed wet, froze hard crust out there, they can't hardly get grass. Supposed a warm up this weekend."

"God damn it," he whispered, "when she comes in send her here." He shivered and retched.

THE snow rattled down on Ottaline in the cab of Aladdin's big Case tractor, a huge round bale on the hydraulic-lift spear. It could keep snowing until June the way it was coming down. At noon she drove back to the house, ravenous, hoping for macaroni and cheese. She left the Case idling.

"Dad wants you," said Wauneta. It was beef and biscuits. Ottaline took a pickle from the cut-glass dish.

She sidled into her parents' bedroom. She was one of those who could not bear sick people, who did not know where to look except away from the bloodshot eyes and swollen face.

"Look," he said. "It's first Friday a the month tomorrow. I got Amendinger comin out at eight o'clock. If I ain't better"—he coughed until he retched—"you are goin a deal with him, take him out there, he can look them over, see what we got, make you a offer." Amendinger, the cattle buyer, was a dark-complexioned man with sagging eyes, a black mustache whose ends plunged down to his jawline like twin divers. He wore black shirts and a black hat, gave off an air of implacable decision and control. He had no sense of humor and every rancher cursed him behind his back.

"Dad, I am scared a death a that man. He will get the best a me. He will make us a low offer and I will get rattled and say yes. Why not Ma? Nobody gets on her bad side."

"Because you know the animals and she don't. If Tyler was here—but he ain't. You're my little cowgirl. You don't have to say nothin. Just take him around, hear his offer, and tell him we'll get back to him." He knew that Amendinger did business on the spot; there was no getting back to him. "I get better of this I am goin a buy a plane I been lookin at. It's the only way to work this big of a ranch. A truck ain't no good, windows and all."

"I could bring him in here, Dad."

"Nobody outside a my family sees me layin flat. God damn it." He coughed. "Ain't that how it goes, first your money and then your clothes."

SHE had the poorest kind of night and in the morning rose groggy and in a mood. The snow had quit and a warm Chinook blew. Already the plain was bare, the shrinking drifts lingering in cuts and folds of land. They were still out of coffee. Upstairs Aladdin wheezed and panted.

"He don't look good," said Wauneta.

By eight the cattle dealer had not arrived. Ottaline ate two oatmeal cookies, another slice of ham, drank a glass of milk. It was past nine when the dealer's black truck pulled in, Amendinger's black hat bent down as he reached for papers. There were three hound dogs in the back. He got out with the clipboard in his hand, already punching figures on a handheld calculator. Ottaline went outside.

It was not the cattle dealer but his son, Flyby Amendinger, big-nostrilled, heavyset, a cleft in his stubbly chin, as quiet as three in the morning.

"Mr. Touhey around?" he asked, looking at his boots.

"I'm showin you the stock," she said. "He got the flu. Or some kind a thing. We thought you would come at eight. We thought you was goin a be your father."

"I missed a couple turns. Dad's over in Hoyt." He fished in his shirt pocket, drew out newspaper clippings, showed her an ad, Amendinger & Son Livestock Dealers. "I been workin with Dad almost nine years, guess I got a idea what I am doin by now."

"I didn't mean you didn't," she said. "I'm glad it's you. Your dad's mustache scares me." She pictured him driving the red roads to the ranch, roads like heavy red marker traced over the map, cutting the circle of horizon.

"Scare the hell out a me, too, when I was a little kid." He looked at the porch, the house, the wedding wheat, the blue-door shed.

"Well," she said. "Here we go."

"That wheat needs cuttin," he said.

She drove and he stared at the far horizon visible beneath the bellies of cows. They bounced over pasture, the dust in the truck cab shaken loose and suspended in a fine sparkling haze as though an emanation from their private thoughts that might coalesce into audible statement. He opened the gates. Ottaline thanked him, pointed out the good qualities of the cattle, the trim, heavily muscled bodies on straight legs, the rib-eye bulge on each side of the backbone, their large size. He murmured at a coarse-fronted cow with a steery look to her, pointed out some small and sickle-hocked steers with flat loins. He counted, made notes and added figures, offered a fair price.

"You are a knowledgeable girl," he said, "and a damn good-lookin one, though upholstered. Care for a beer?"

Ottaline spent the morning tipping back beer bottles with Flyby, who described the lonely life of a cattle dealer's son, illustrating his sad sentences with long, flat gestures of his hand. It was noon when he left.

She gave the figures to Aladdin from the bedroom doorway, hanging back. Dazed and fiery, bursting with tea, he nodded, said all right. It was all right. He did not need a computer to know the margin to a penny. It was all right, and wasn't that a sad relief. He couldn't say as much for himself.

THAT night old Red woke from his shallow sleep to a stiff, whistling risp he dreaded to hear. His heart beat, he rose and felt his way to the pantry window. The dirty moonlight fizzed through shredded clouds, glanced off a swinging scythe blade, though it was not Death come for him this time but a man in a dark hat cutting the wedding wheat in hissing swathes, stopping at the end of every row to swig from a bottle. He saw his granddaughter Ottaline, mouth cracked wide, her hundred teeth glinting like a mica bed, leaning against the doorframe of the blue-door shed. She hurled a piece of oily metal into the sky, where it twisted and fell, stooped for another, sent it flying.

Old Red watched, summed it up. "I drove teams. I cowboyed. Worked since I was a kid. Run sheep and run cows. Still present, fork end down, ready as a dog with two dicks. I ain't finished my circle yet."

Tyler and Shan were far away hoping for good luck, but here was Ottaline and her haymaker. He wouldn't waste his dear breath laughing.

THERE was a wedding in September and a tremendous picnic under the Amendinger cattle-sale canopy, red and white stripes that cast a rose flush, trestle tables in the side yard, pork barbecue, a baron of beef pit-roasted, spitted lamb, prairie oysters, sweet corn, giant shrimp in Tyler's ketchup sauce, oven rolls, a keg of sour pickles, melons, ripe Oregon peaches made into deep-dish pies, and a three-tier wedding cake with pale-blue frosting topped by a tiny plastic bull and cow. The day was hot and clear and the

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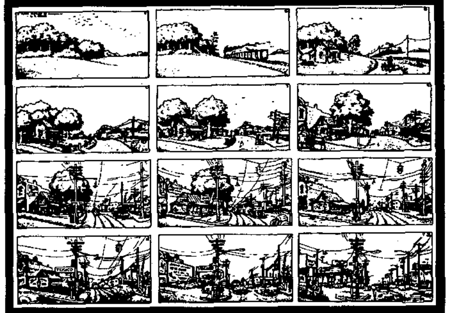

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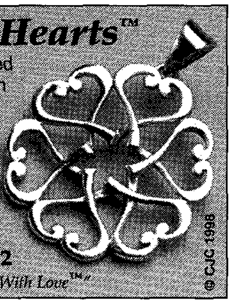

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Red Wall trembled on the horizon. Out beyond the fence the stripped frame of the 4030 lay where Aladdin had dragged it, on its side in the sagebrush. Wauneta wept, not for her daughter but for the cut wheat. Tyler inspected the ranch, looking it over with a displeased eye. Everything was smaller and shabbier. Why had he wanted this? He had a cell phone and sat on his horse talking to someone far away. Wauneta told Shan she intended to come out to Las Vegas and visit one of these days.

"Not if I got somethin to say about it," said Aladdin.

The guests dragged the folding chairs back and forth, and when Ottaline smoothed the rayon satin of her dress over her knees she felt the grit, saw the glinting dust caught in the weft. A spot of barbecue sauce marked the bosom. At last she changed into the new aquamarine pants suit and drove away with Flyby Amendinger for a four-day honeymoon among the motels of Nebraska.

Where wheat once grew a row of doghouses stood. There were two trucks in the driveway. Old Red in his pantry wished for deafness when the bedsprings sang above. Otherwise all was the same.

Aladdin applied for a bank loan for another plane. "I said if the Lord spared me I'd get it." He was dreaming of a 1948 Aeronca Sedan, a loose, big-cabined thing with feminine curves and a split crankcase to be replaced with an undamaged one from Donald's Cowboy Junkyard.

"She's so roomy, if I had to I could put a couple calves in her, bales a hay, cake, just about anything, even Ottaline, ha-ha."

The bank approved the loan and on a quiet and gray morning, the wind lying low, Aladdin started his truck, got halfway down the drive, backed up, parked, and came into the kitchen. Old Red dunked his toast in black coffee.

"I am goin a fly that plane home," he said. "I will land in the Triangle pasture. Preciate it you was all out there watchin. You, too, bubba," he said to his son-in-law.

"I got a go look at Trev's cows this mornin." Flyby Amendinger did not like living under the thumb of Aladdin Touhey. In the night he complained to Ottaline that Aladdin was worse than his mustachioed father.

"My block don't fit his tackle," he whispered.

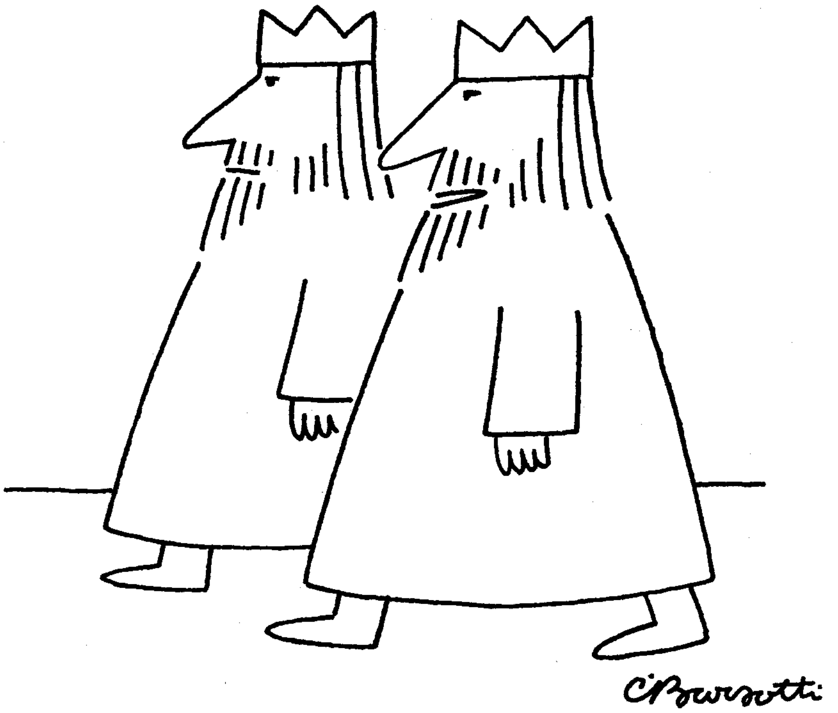
"It sure fits mine," she whispered back.

"Call Trev up. Say you'll come a little later. He won't give a shit. I want a see everbody out wavin. Cause for celebration get a plane on this damn place again. Goin a teach Ottaline how to fly it."

It was midmorning when they heard the drone of the engine.

"Ma!" shouted Ottaline into the house. "He's comin!"

Wauneta came outside and stood



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with Ottaline and Flyby staring at the horizon. Old Red hobbled onto the porch. The wind had come up and was gusty and chill, the distant line of cliff marking a dull red break in the sere plain. Wauneta ran back into the house for her jacket.

The plane flew over and headed toward the Red Wall, turned, and came again in their direction, very much lower. It passed over them twenty feet off the ground. Aladdin's head was barely visible in the smoke from home-grown that clouded the cabin. The plane soared up, shaking in the wind. It rose in a steep climb, levelled out, and sailed away. When it was only a distant speck it turned and came toward the ranch again, curving and sliding, coming low. At a certain angle it resembled a billboard in the sky.

"He is actin up," said Wauneta. She watched the plane roar in low like a crop duster.

"I think he is goin a land," said Flyby, "or take a soil sample. Or stake out a homestead."

"He is actin up. I know him. YOU GET DOWN HERE!" Wauneta shouted at the plane.

As though obeying her, it touched the ground, sending up a puff of dust, bounced back into the air, and made two more prodigious hops before the left wheel caught the iron frame of the abandoned tractor and the plane fell on its face, crumpled into a mash of cloth, metal, and rancher. There was an explosion like a mighty backfire, but no flame. A ball of dust rose.

Flyby dragged Aladdin to safe ground. His father-in-law's head lolled at an unusual angle.

"He is dead, I think. I think he is dead. Yes, he is dead. His neck is broke."

Wauneta shrieked.

"Look what you done," said Ottaline to her. "You killed him."

"Me! That's what cuttin the wheat's done."

"He done it hisself," called old Red from the porch. It was clear to him the way things had to go. They'd plant Aladdin. Ottaline and her scytheman would run the ranch. Wauneta would pack her suitcase and steer for the slot machines. The minute she was out of sight he intended to move out of the pantry and back upstairs. The main thing in life was staying power. That was it: stand around long enough you'd get to sit down. ◆

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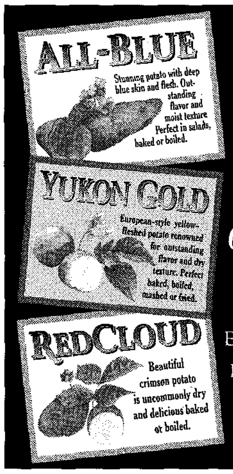

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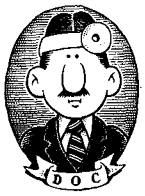

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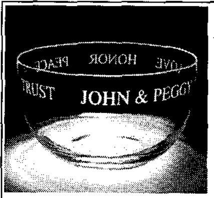

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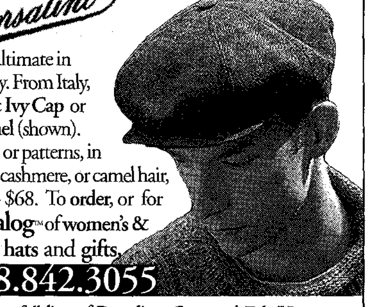

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE BIG BAD WOLF IS BACK

A year when picture books have come of age.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

TWENTY years have now passed since Bruno Bettelheim, in "The Uses of Enchantment," pointed out the therapeutic function of fairy tales. In those days, fairy tales had fallen out of fashion. Educators didn't want children to know what the big bad wolf did to those pigs after he blew their houses down. The educators were wrong, Bettelheim said. Fairy tales didn't frighten; they comforted, by ministering to the infant unconscious. The wolf helped children to identify their own oral aggression and cope with it. As for the fate of those two no-account pigs who threw their houses together out of inferior building materials so that they could go out and play, this just showed children why they ought to give up the pleasure principle in favor of the reality principle, as embodied in the third, brick-using, play-postponing pig. Children have terrible struggles, terrible fears, Bettelheim wrote. They needed stories about these things, not about how Billy goes to the fire station.

I don't know whether, in response to Bettelheim, today's parents are more likely to read Grimm's fairy tales to their children. I doubt it. Grimm is old, and nothing old is popular. But if it's therapy parents are looking for in children's books they needn't turn to the nineteenth century. Having just read a hundred-odd new picture books, I can report that many of them are frankly aimed at helping children calm the beast within. The trailblazer here was Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are," a tale of oral aggression such as Dr. Bettelheim himself might have written ("I'll eat you up!" Max says to his mother), and one that is satisfactorily resolved (after much cathartic carousing with monsters, Max eats his dinner rather than his mother). "Where the Wild Things Are" is celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary this year. It has sold eight million copies. Clearly, child-soothing is popular with grownups. Sendak has therefore had many followers.

Some of these books we could live without. It is one thing to address fears, another to lay the child on the couch. Consider Matt Cibula and Brian Strassburg's "What's Up with You, Taquandra Fu?" (Zino; $16.95). As you may have guessed from her name, Taquandra Fu is a nonconformist—"the weirdest girl in class," as she puts it. She wears funny hats; she says words backward. In consequence, she's unpopular. It is not a bad thing to write stories for such children. That's the target audience for "The Ugly Duckling." But "What's Up with You" is not a book so much as a psychology lesson, administered with a hammer. No child of T. Fu's age (about seven) would tell us that her "self-esteem" was being damaged by her peers—and if she did would we want to listen? The girl, I need hardly say, learns to accept herself, but I doubt whether this will be the outcome for those off-center youngsters whose parents buy them this book. Like me, they will probably find themselves wishing that Taquandra would change her name to Jennifer and shut up.

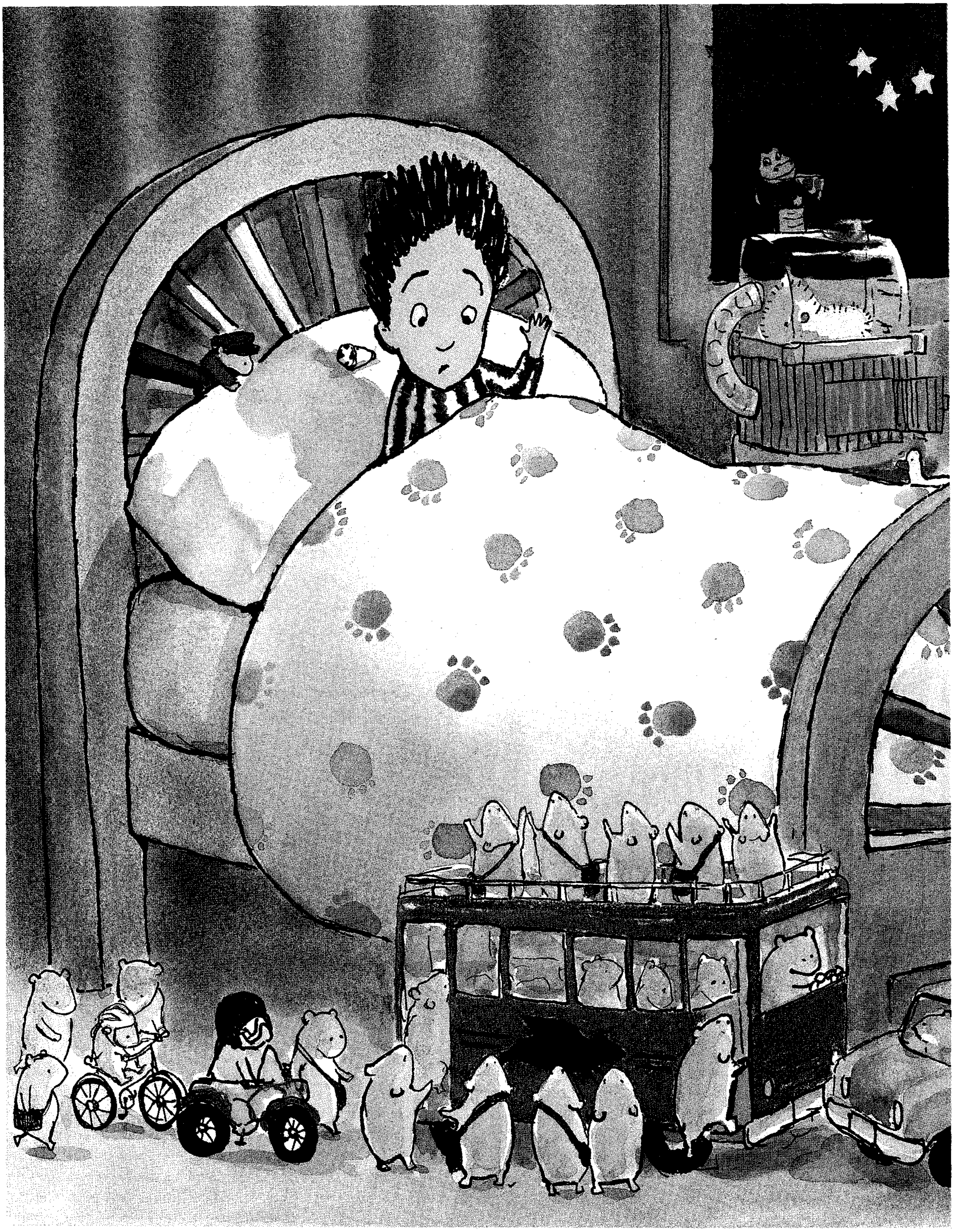
In certain books we actually get a preface by the experts. Bill Cosby's "Shipwreck Saturday" (Scholastic; $13.95) is introduced by a letter from Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School, explaining the psychological principles underlying Little Bill's distress over the wreck of his toy boat. I hope no child reads this letter. Meanwhile, Bob Barner's "To Everything" (Chronicle; $14.95), a replay of Ecclesiastes, has an afterword that advises parents to ask the child about such things as "a time to cry": "Think about a time when you have cried. What made you cry?" Even Bettelheim warned parents against interpreting stories to children. This was an invasion of their privacy, he said.

But in most good children's literature the same thing happens as in adult literature: however strong the idea, the author identifies with the symbol—the boy, the bear—and what we get is a tale rather than a talking to. Such is the case with William Steig's "Pete's a Pizza" (HarperCollins; $13.95), a book about bad moods. Pete is in despair because he was supposed to go out and play ball with his friends, but now it's raining. So his father makes a pizza out of him. He kneads him; he twirls him in the air. He puts oil (water, actually) on him, then tomatoes (checkers), then cheese (pieces of paper). Then he puts him in the oven (on the couch) and, after a minute, takes him out. "Ah! Now our pizza is nice and hot!" the father says as he lays it on the table. But surprise! The pizza hops off the table and runs away. At the same time, the sun comes out, and Pete can go out and play. This cute book, in which everyone looks like a hand-painted kielbasa, is as much a game recommendation as a book. Either way, it teaches something that is very hard to get through one's head: moods pass.

So do dreams, as a number of current books are here to tell your child. In Marc Sutherland's spooky and beautiful "The Waiting Place" (Abrams; $14.95) we don't see the dreaming child until the last page. All we see is what the child sees: the bedroom invaded now by a yeti with apple trees on his head, now by a ship full of ill-mannered Vikings laughing at a joke they don't tell us. Soon the dreams take up all the space in the room. Blizzards descend. Oceans pour in. We are lost. Then, suddenly, there comes the voice—"It's seven o'clock, time to wake up!"—and all those things vanish. I, for one, felt better after reading this book.

But forget dreams. Just getting into bed is obviously a big problem, for the stack of going-to-sleep books for 1998 is about up to my knee. In this pile, as it happens, is one of the most lovable picture books of the year—Peggy Rathmann's "10 Minutes Till Bedtime" (Putnam; $16.99). "10 minutes till bedtime," says a nice father with sticking-up hair to a boy with the same hair. Then—what can I say?—everything happens. A horde of hamsters arrives at the front door with beach umbrellas and video cameras. They have chosen the boy's bedroom as their vacation spot. They lay out picnics; they trampoline on the bed; they seem to say that there are many

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS



For children, the ability to imagine things that are not there can itself be a source of power. (Illustration from Peggy Rathmann's "10 Minutes Till Bedtime.")

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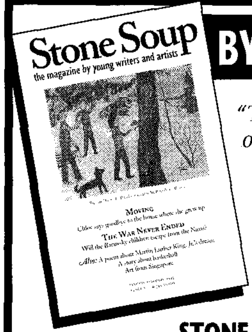

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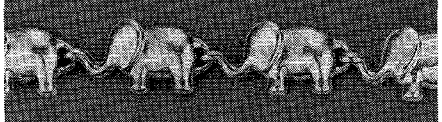

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wonderful things to do besides going to sleep. "5 minutes till bedtime," the father now calls, whereupon a new and larger horde of hamsters pulls up—these with canoes and recreational vehicles. They join the boy in his bath. They do the hula; they use his underpants as a parachute. What is so wonderful here is that the hamsters, adorable as they are (there are baby ones, too), are also slightly scary. There are scores and scores of them. They are an infestation, a pullulation: uncontrollable. But it turns out that they aren't uncontrollable. "Bedtime!" the father calls. The boy charges toward his bed, and the hundred and one fur balls pack up their beach blankets and go away. The father comes in and kisses the boy good night, and the boy goes to sleep, happily. I don't know what those hamsters represent; Dr. Poussaint is going to have to write me a letter. But this combination of cuteness and scariness recurs again and again in American children's literature. (Compare the monsters in "Where the Wild Things Are.") I think that it reflects the child's hopeful image of himself: endearing as he wants to be, in order to be loved, and frightening as he also wants to be, in order not to be wiped out by the need for love.

Children are small, after all—small and smart, fully aware that they have no power. That knowledge is another thing the books minister to, sometimes indirectly, by asking children to regard their minds as reservoirs of power. Tobi Tobias's "A World of Words" (Lothrop/Morrow; $16), like many other alphabet books, is for children who have already learned their ABCs and can enjoy seeing the alphabet book used as a literary genre, a twenty-six-part invention with a given theme. Tobias's theme is reading, the purpose for which you learn your ABCs. Each letter comes with a quotation from literature. For "O" we get "orange" and a little poem by Gary Soto on peeling an orange. For "P," on the same page, we get "pocket" and a line from D. H. Lawrence: "You love me so much, you want to put me in your pocket." Then, facing these, is Peter Malone's splendid surrealist painting of an orange-haired child and a kangaroo sitting back to back under a watery moon: the child is peeling an orange and passing segments to the kangaroo, and she is dreamily passing them on to her baby, whose head pokes up appreciatively from her pouch. This book is a sort of Baudelaire for children—all correspondences and *volupté.*

As for practical power, the power to go places and change the world, Marjorie Priceman takes on that subject in "My Nine Lives, by Clio" (Atheneum; $16). Clio, a cat, is now in her ninth life, and, boy, did she do a lot in her prior eight lives. In 3000 B.C., in Mesopotamia, she noticed that the stars looked like the things she had gathered for dinner—the fish, the crab—so she named all the constellations in the sky. In 1500 A.D., in Italy, she lived with Leonardo da Vinci, and one day, when he was painting a dour woman named Lisa, Clio jumped up into the lady's lap and caused her to smile a famous smile. Oh, and she also invented the Roman alphabet and the fork and the parachute, usually by playing. The watercolors are light and airy, just what a cat in a hurry might do, and the story, besides being a good history lesson, is reassuring: important things get discovered by accident; you can discover them, too; adults aren't so smart.

But if adults aren't so smart why do we have to listen to them when they tell us to eat our vegetables and comb our hair? This is the question addressed in David Wisniewski's "The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups" (Lothrop/Morrow; $16). As Wisniewski explains, the reasons adults give us—that vegetables are good for us and that combs keep our hair neat—are true; they just aren't the *real* reasons. The real reasons are far more terrifying. Take vegetable eating. It turns out that the reason we eat vegetables is to keep them from eating us: "Millions of years ago, vegetables ruled the earth. Big bunches of broccoli stomped through the jungles, followed by ferocious carrots and savage packs of peas." What were they looking for? Human beings. They were man-eating vegetables. Our ancestors put up with this for a few eras, but eventually they rebelled—a process vividly captured in Wisniewski's cut-out illustrations. In one we see a reconstruction of the great massacre of the squash. The caption reads, "Thousands of butternut squash, frightened by hunters' fiery torches, plunge over a cliff in what is now France. Scientists believe this incident gave squash its name." Thus the Age of

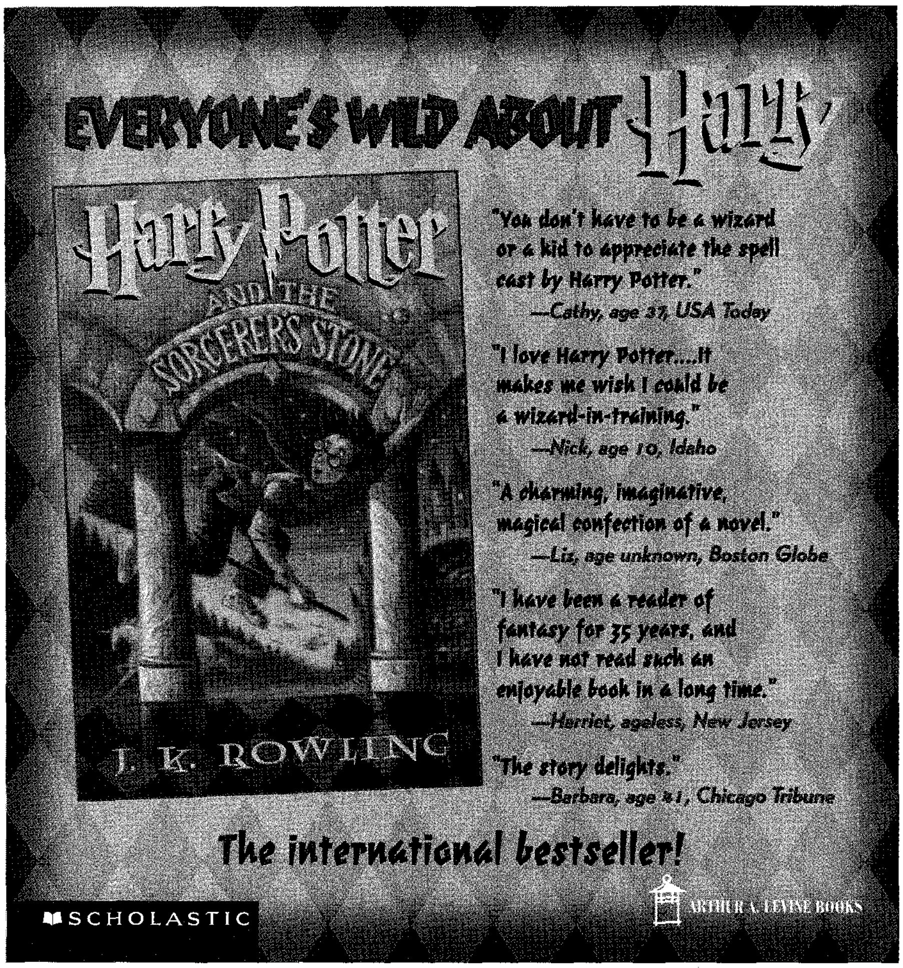
Vegetables drew to a close, but they could rise again, and therefore it is wise to eat as many of them as possible: "It's a simple way to protect modern civilization."

As for hair combing, the reason you have to do it is that hair grows inward, not outward, and if you don't keep pulling it outward with your comb it will get sucked back into your skull. Then you will be bald. Furthermore, your head will be stuffed with ingrown hair, leaving no room for your brain. If this happens, the body can sometimes adjust. It can direct the hair to grow out in other places, in the form of a mustache or beard. That's what happened with Shakespeare. Or, as in the case of Winston Churchill, the brain can be relocated to a place that has more room, such as a bowler hat. But don't assume that what Mother Nature did for Shakespeare and Churchill she will do for you. Comb your hair.

Wisniewski may be speaking from experience here. At least part of his brain seems to have been relocated to the fourth grade. If I had to buy a book for a nine-year-old this Christmas, Wisniewski's is the one I would choose. It reminds children of what they know all too well, that they live in a world of grownup conspiracy. Still, it is therapeutic: your parents are protecting you, even if they don't tell you from what.

As most parents do not need to be told, today's juvenile literature is aimed not just at children's psyches, but also at their attitudes, their politics. I have good news, though. Writers of children's books seem to have grown up politically. They have got more tough-minded, more honest, and more comical—or some of them have. Yes, the smug, earnest ones are still around, too. In Virginia Grossman and Sylvia Long's "Ten Little Rabbits" (Chronicle; $13.95) you will find the descendants of Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cottontail—the descendants, that is, of a wholly English tradition of sentimental realism—sitting around in Navajo blankets and beating drums as if that were what they did all the time. But as best as I can tell, this what-problem-we-got-no-problem approach is no longer the rule in children's books.

Sherry Garland's "My Father's Boat" (Scholastic; $15.95), for instance, tells of a day that a boy spends helping his father on the father's fishing boat. They are American, but soon we learn that the family is from Vietnam. They are war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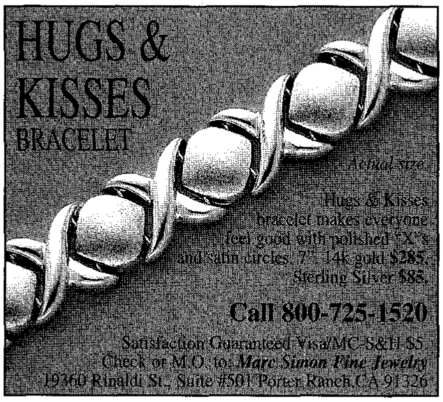
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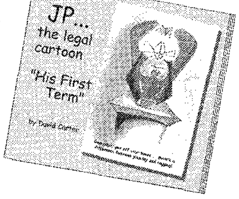

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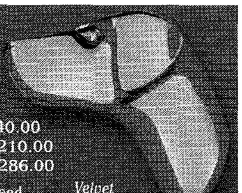

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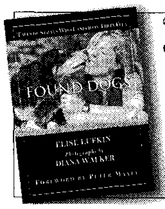

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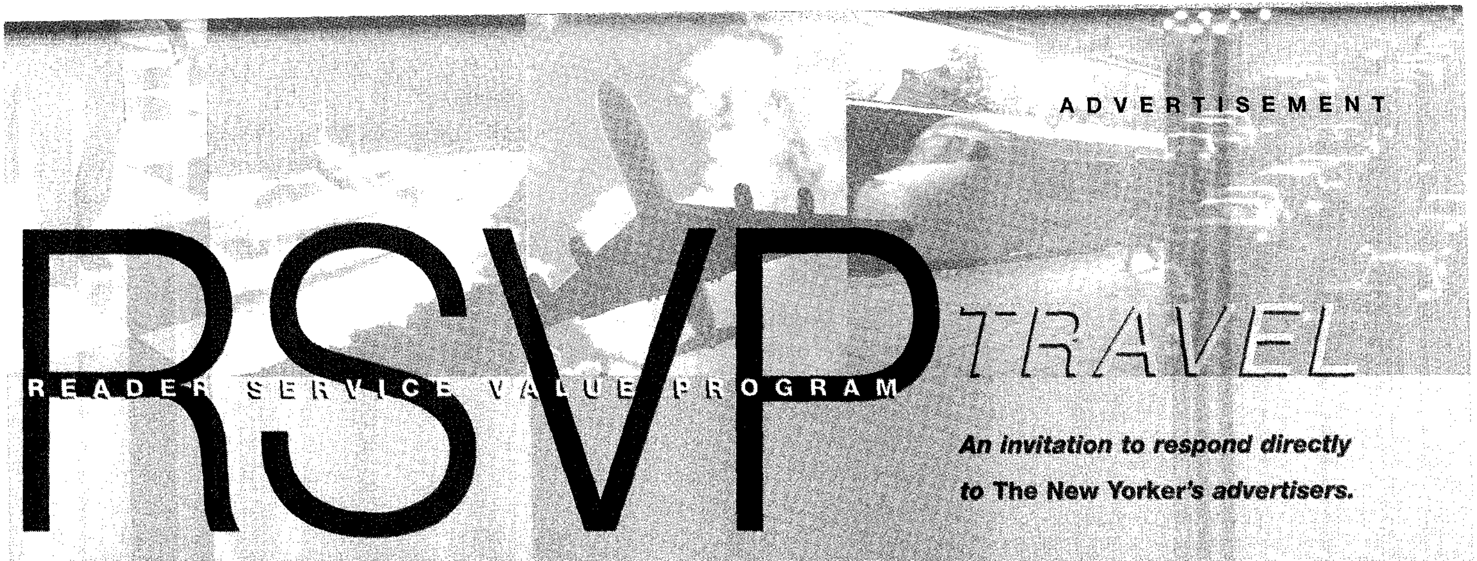
refugees. And though their day together strengthens the bond between the boy and his father, we also find out about a father-son bond that was broken. The father's father—he, too, is a fisherman—was left behind in Vietnam. "Do you think Grandfather still remembers you?" the boy asks. "The heart doesn't count the years," the father replies. Meanwhile, Ted Rand's beautiful illustrations, with pink jellyfish blooming beneath the waters, seem to promise that nature unites them. But they are not united, and they probably never will be. This is a grave, quiet book about the emotional consequences of political conflict.

The lessons aren't just more direct than they used to be; they seem more stylish, witty. In Tomi Ungerer's "Flix" (Rinehart; $16.95), Flix is a dog born to a pair of very surprised cats. (Later, the father cat admits to reporters that his grandmother was said to have had a clandestine connection with a pug.) There is a scandal, needless to say, but the parents brave it out, and manage to teach Flix some cat skills, like climbing trees. This is a good thing, because later, when Flix is in college, a fire breaks out in the dormitory. "Help!" cries Mirzah de la Fourrière, a French exchange student—a poodle—who is stuck in the dorm. Flix scales a tree and hauls her to safety. Her chic blue skirt is barely singed. Flix and Mirzah marry, and soon they have a baby—a kitten. The book is about race, of course, and Ungerer stints nothing concerning the discomforts of its cultural meanings. Nasty little cat children throw things at Flix. Cattown restaurants have "No Dog Here" signs. Ungerer, who grew up in Alsace under the Nazis, has had direct experience of racial-purity campaigns and isn't scared of looking at them. With his long view, he can also hold out hope. Flix goes into politics, creating a new party, the C.D.U. (Cats and Dogs United), and brings Dog City and Cattown under his joint mayoralty.

Apart from the portrayal of direct conflict, another thing that is now daring to show its face in children's literature is ethnic humor, a good example being Arna Bontemps's "Bubber Goes to Heaven" (Oxford; $17.95), which will be published in December, with woodcuts by Daniel Minter. Bontemps—poet, novelist, folklorist—was a figure in the Harlem Renaissance. (With his friend Langston Hughes, he edited the 1958 "Book of Negro Folklore.") He also wrote children's books, including this tale of what happens when Bubber, age ten, falls out of a tree and dies and goes to Heaven. Heaven turns out to be a slightly improved version of Huntsville, Alabama, the little dirt town that Bubber comes from. Mothers still scold, cops still throw you out of the park, but everyone has work, and food is free. ("Bubber" was written during the Depression.) You can go into the bakery and walk out with all the doughnuts you want. After various adventures, Bubber is trying out his new wings and has another fall. Presto! He is back in his bed in Huntsville, where, of course, nobody believes his story. "Shucks," Aunt Sarah says. "You ain't seen heaven. . . . You is just had a nightmare. Lie still now."

"Bubber" wasn't published during Bontemps's lifetime—he couldn't get anyone interested in it—and my guess is that fifteen years ago it would have had even less chance of being published, for it is filled with Negro dialect, Negro lore, Negro stereotypes. (As Bubber himself notes, the lady who takes care of him in Heaven bears a striking resemblance to Aunt Jemima.) In the eighties, the use of such things was considered harmful—a slur or, in any case, a bad influence. Hence the removal of Helen Bannerman's "Little Black Sambo" from libraries and bookstores. In the past few years, though, publishers and parents seem to have recognized that such books can't be reduced to the sum of their archaisms. Bannerman's "Sambo" is back. According to Peter Glassman, who owns Books of Wonder, the excellent children's-book store on West Eighteenth Street, many children's-book authors are no longer willing to toe a political line. "They just want to tell their stories," he says. "They don't want to offend people, but they don't want to be hamstrung, either." The publishers seem to feel the same way. "Bubber" is a good sign, and a sweet book.

In other children's books, the political points are far less overt, maybe even unconscious. Yet one does not need to ask why in the past two decades there has been a spate of children's books on Joan of Arc. It is hard to imagine a more exemplary feminist heroine. Joan's story is also a bang-up adventure. No call for fairy godmothers here. From age thirteen onward, Joan, as she told it, was regularly visited by the Archangel Michael, together with saints Catherine



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21	GO AL + L OUT

DOWN

1	SALAD BOWL (anag.)
2	ORZO (hidden)
3	NEATO (anag.)
4	A + T EASE
5	G(O + OD D)AY
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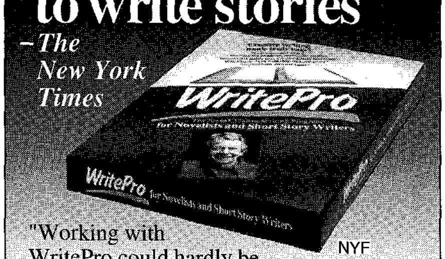
and Margaret. Then there is the Hundred Years' War, which she helped to end, and the witchcraft trial, in which she bravely faced down her inquisitors. (She would be a perfect subject for a Disney animated feature if it weren't for that unfortunate burning at the stake.) The story is doubly appealing for children, since Joan the Warrior was not much more than a child: she died at nineteen. Josephine Poole's "Joan of Arc" (Knopf; $18), written for preteens, tells the tale simply and poetically, and Angela Barrett's illustrations, done in a sort of enhaloed realist style reminiscent of N. C. Wyeth, home in on Joan's character: her courage and her aloneness. With her plain, dignified little face and ragged haircut, she looks like someone we might know. At the same time, her image shimmers with larger meaning. In the picture of her cutting off her hair—she is shown with the job half done: a girl on one side, a boy on the other—we can see straight through her, to Jo March and Gertrude Stein.

None of this is stated. No jacket copy tells us that Joan is a model for the new androgyny. Nor, in John Beifuss's "Armadillo Ray" (Chronicle; $13.95), illustrated by Peggy Turley, does anyone call attention to the fact that most published animal tales are not about armadillos living in Southwestern deserts—an environment familiar to Mexican-American children, but not, say, to children in Cincinnati. Armadillo Ray wonders what the moon is, and why it changes its shape. He asks the snakes, and they tell him that the moon is a snake that takes different forms as it coils itself this way and that. Unsure about this, Ray turns to the prairie dog, who tells him that the moon is the entrance to the burrow of "the great prairie dog." They wait for him to stick his head out; he doesn't. ("There must be too many cars," says the prairie-dog informant.) Ray then goes to the owl, and gets a more scientific explanation. "Orbit," "crescent," "craters," blah, blah, says the owl. Ray knows the owl is telling him the truth, but, for some reason, he suddenly feels very tired. He goes to sleep and dreams that the moon is a great, shining armadillo.

If I hadn't lived through the last twenty years in the United States, would I think that this was a story about "diversity" and ethnocentricity? Is it? Surely there were stories like this before, with the chicken interpreting things in a chicken way, the pig in a pig way. Actually, I think that "Armadillo Ray" does have conscious political intentions. (Chronicle has published it in a Spanish as well as an English edition. Also, there's an afterword explaining that all cultures have their own moon myths.) But the fact that the question has to be asked says something. The politics of children's books is getting more subtle, less tendentious. Certain things can now be assumed, even kidded about.

This is a new direction, and I hope that it will be followed. I also hope that, as the atmosphere of earnestness lifts, there will be more room in children's books for things that, however unedifying, are still part of the child's world—for nastiness, silliness, rebellion, a sense of the ridiculous, and a sense of darkness, not just in one's room but also in the world. When, near the bottom of my pile of books, I came upon Jules Feiffer's charming "I Lost My Bear" (Morrow; $16) and found a girl screaming at her sister ("I have never, never, *never* played with your stupid bear, and I want you to stop playing with my nail polish!") I was amazed, not because someone was screaming at her sister—my sister and I screamed at each other daily—but because this was the first sibling quarrel in the whole pile. Nor are we likely, in these books, to find any parents being criticized as Mr. Darling was in "Peter Pan." Alison Lurie, in her excellent study of children's literature, "Don't Tell the Grown-Ups"—it has just been reissued in paperback (Little, Brown; $14)—repeatedly stresses the subversive power of good children's books, but it is worth noting that all except two or three of the authors she discusses are long dead. In most of today's books, the world is benign. Craziness, even humor, is in short supply. (Wisniewski's "The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups" was the only laugh-out-loud book I found.) Also rare is any sense of the weird, the unreal, except in those dreams that, we are quickly assured, we wake up from.

And so, of all the children's books I read, the one I liked best was the darkest and strangest one, Peter Sís's "Tibet Through the Red Box" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25). How can I say what this



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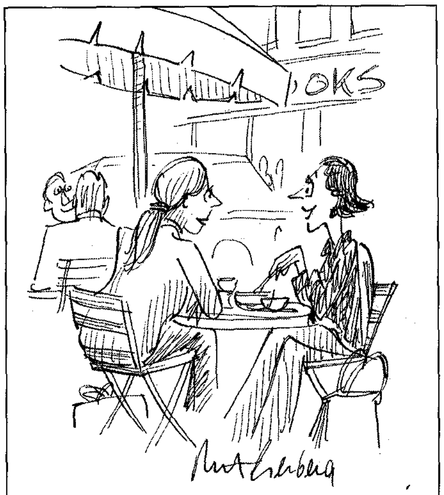
book is? A "Divine Comedy" for children? The core story is as follows. Peter Sís grew up in Prague, the son of a filmmaker. On his father's desk there was a mysterious red box, which he was never allowed to open. Now his father summons him back to Prague and turns the red box over to him. He opens it and finds a diary that his father wrote when, years ago, he was sent to China on a government assignment and got stranded in the Himalayas, among Tibetan tribespeople. The father describes the people: how they give him wild onions to eat and stick out their tongues at him. (That is to show that there are no lies on their tongues.) He comes upon a lake where the fish have human faces—a horrifying image—and sleeps in the cave of a yeti. Finally, he penetrates to Potala, the palace of the Dalai Lama, and wanders through a thousand rooms—rooms with stars, rooms with coffins, "a room for every emotion and heart's desire." In the final room he gets a big surprise, which I won't tell.

But the father's diary is only one level of narration. From page to page, it is intercut with other time planes: the author's present, the author's past—sitting, as a child, in the study of his absent father. And that's not to speak of the planes of meaning: political (the Chinese invasion of Tibet), spiritual (Tibetan Buddhism), and, above all, emotional (the boy's longing for his father, the father's longing for his family). The illustrations are wondrous: scarlet palaces, mountains with eyes, mandalas that seem to enclose the whole world, and all this radiating from the father's study, which is filled with the sort of delicate, fascinating things—eggshells painted with butterflies, pictures of people with bells on their hats—that a child would be told not to touch. The book ends in comfort: the father returns, the boy (now a man) is allowed to open the red box. We get to touch. But with this reassurance come mystery, illumination, hair-on-end chills—experiences that, however distant from comfort and justice, are still things that we want from stories. ◆

Pace University in New York reports that registration for foreign-language classes for corporate employees seems to be following the trends in international commerce. Pace said the fastest growth in registration over the last five years has been in Brazilian.—*Philadelphia Inquirer.*

Followed closely by Canadian.



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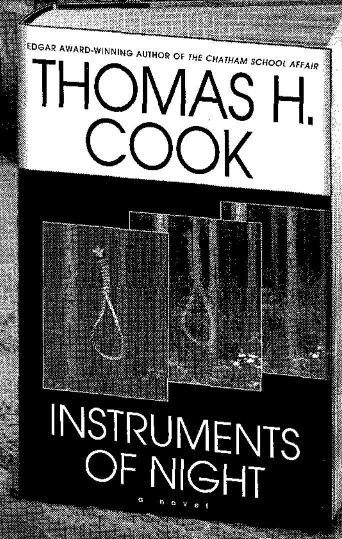

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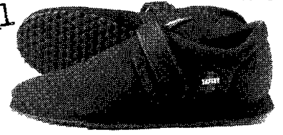

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A HELLUVA TOWNE

Finding the future in old New York.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

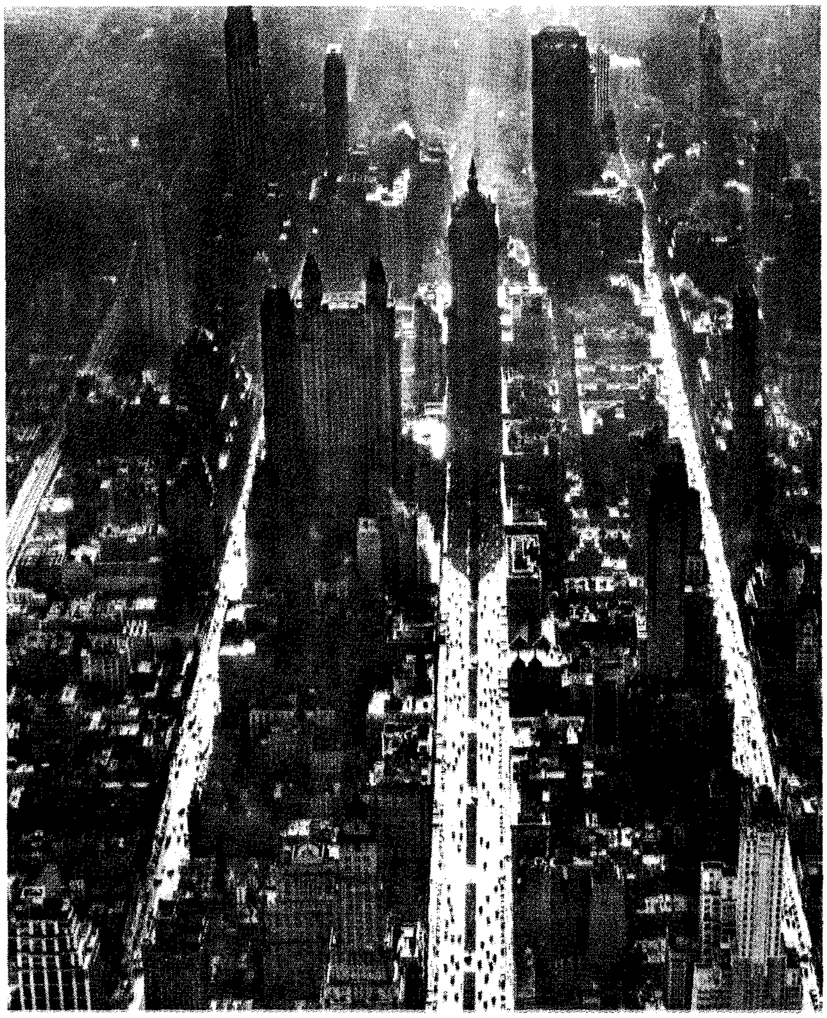
A COUPLE of years back, in a memorable exchange in *Forbes*, the writer and social critic George Gilder referred to cities as "leftover baggage from the industrial era." Technology, Gilder felt, had liberated us from the tyranny of places full of crowds, noise, dirt, and crime. Why should people live among the general mess of a city like New York when they could buy, sell, and speculate from Greenwich instead, or Sun Valley? On a computer screen, Waco is the same as Wall Street. This thesis has been a given for some time among the technologically savvy. Cities emerged because people and buildings had to be jammed together in order to facilitate the manufacture of goods, making of deals, and delivering of advice. Now, at the end of the twentieth century, we are concerned less with objects than with information, and information—whether it be the blips on a bond trader's computer screen, the goods for sale on an Internet site, or the words being sent into the air by a broadcaster—has no tangible presence. It needs no place to shelter it.

So why is it that New York, the biggest city of all, has boomed in the last decade? It can't be only because Rudy Giuliani got rid of the squeegee men.

That the information culture, which coyly pretends to need no city, has not killed New York but made it stronger will come as no surprise to readers of "Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898," by Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace (Oxford; $49.95). The story they tell, over the course of twelve hundred pages, shows that while the city's infrastructure may seem old and crumbling, New York is in many ways the first modern city, the first city to grow huge on the basis not of the things it made or even the objects it traded but on the information it exchanged. New York was never an industrial city in the sense that, say, Detroit or Pittsburgh was. It was the center of power because its financiers exerted nearly total control over America's money and its publishers and journalists controlled the flow of information.

That New York figured out the twenty-first century's game back in the nineteenth doesn't explain why people continue to gravitate to its dense streets long after physical proximity theoretically has become irrelevant to doing business, and the reason, of course, is that physical proximity is *not* irrelevant to doing business: it matters. Dennis Weatherstone, the former chairman of J. P. Morgan, once remarked that financial centers wouldn't exist without lunch. And when you put enough people together a lot more happens than business deals. Culture, for one thing, follows both money and density, and that is why the nation's center of capital soon became a place in which as much culture was created as was consumed. The sprawling, vaguely anarchic quality of New York made the city a kind of free port of disparate characters, a place with a rich sociocultural tapestry that stoked the fires of both entrepreneurship and culture. This may have led much of the country to view New York with a dislike bordering on contempt, but it gave the city its particular frisson.

The character of the city developed as publishing, shipping, trading, and the capital markets wove a common destiny early in the nineteenth century, creating a city of hustlers who specialized in knowing things before anybody else did. When the price of cotton on the Liverpool markets shot up unexpectedly in 1824, the news reached New York first because the Black Ball Line, a New York-based shipping company, had instituted regular shipping schedules. (Until 1818, ships wouldn't sail until their holds were full.) On learning of the uptick in the value of cotton, Burrows and Wallace tell us, the Black Ball's owner, Jeremiah Thompson, sent agents by fast pilot boat to New Orleans, where they bought cotton at the old, lower price, and immediately resold it at a high profit. “Stories like this, repeated over and over as canals and steamboats quickened the flow of intelligence toward Manhattan, whetted the entrepreneurial imaginations of a new generation of publishers,” Burrows and Wallace report. “By 1830 New York had forty-seven newspapers, eleven of them dailies, each determined to bring the news to its readers ahead of the others.”



The grid of streets imposed by city planners in the early nineteenth century created a rigid frame to contain New York's rambunctious impulses.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM THOMAS © BENJAMIN BLOM

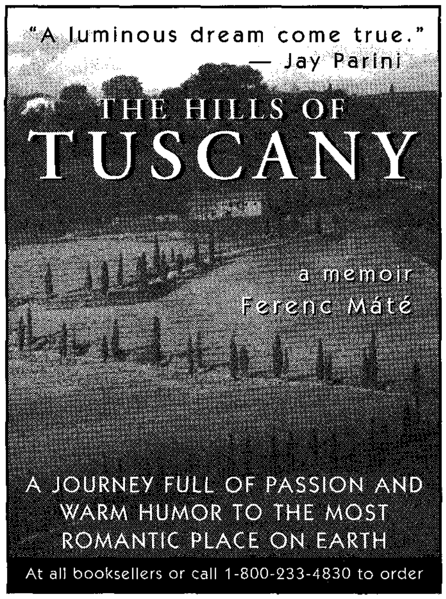
Newspapers were the medium of information in the nineteenth century, and having the information first was the point. “New York's hegemony as a clearinghouse for foreign and domestic news pulled in subscribers from every part of the country and compelled editors elsewhere to cannibalize Manhattan papers for stories,” Burrows and Wallace write. “By 1828, 160,000 newspapers were shipped out monthly through the New York post office; by 1833, nearly a million.”

All this was more or less concurrent with the completion of the Erie Canal, in 1825, which joined the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes for the first time. When the canal opened, it was as if the nation had been tipped on its side, and Midwestern produce suddenly went tumbling toward New York Harbor, enriching the city's traders and virtually guaranteeing the short-term future of its economy. Burrows and Wallace understand that the completion of the canal did not create New York's strength, but confirmed it. It was a precursor of the vast man-made infrastructure that would eventually knit the disparate strands of the nation together. When DeWitt Clinton, the canal's most ardent advocate, spoke to a gathering of businessmen in 1815, he promised them that the canal would make New York “the greatest commercial emporium in the world.” Never mind “greatest”; the word that really shows that Clinton knew what he was talking about is “emporium.” Clinton, like Burrows and Wallace, knew that the city was a marketplace above all. New York embraced the idea of the service economy long before that dreary phrase entered the language.

New York firms failed more often than did “the dynastic enterprises of Boston,” Burrows and Wallace tell us, but that is because entrepreneurs in New York continually went where businessmen in other cities feared to tread. Many of them came from other places, and they were supported by a business culture in which there were relatively few entrenched leaders, and still fewer entrenched ideas. New Yorkers would sell anything to anyone, and they would keep on figuring out new ways to do it. With all due respect to Edith Wharton, Burrows and Wallace make it clear that new money and a certain raucousness did more to shape the character of New York, even old New York, than gentility.

The arrivistes here would always have the jump on the aristocrats, although freewheeling capitalists constantly came up against a powerful regulatory impulse. In 1800, the city payrolls included at least sixty-four public measurers, five weighmasters, twenty-two inspectors of hay, and thirteen inspectors of firewood. New York banned the sale of oysters in the summer, and inspected the food sold in public markets. Bread prices were strictly controlled until 1800, when the Common Council experimented with allowing them to fluctuate according to the market, a decision that was so controversial that it did not become permanent until 1821. Sometimes regulation was the result of disaster, not of planning. The city's first tenement laws, enacted in 1879, were a weak response to a horrendous spectacle of overcrowded and filthy slums, and the regulatory impulse, however strong, managed to do little to improve health standards throughout the nineteenth century. Most of the city's regulations were reactive, and almost all of them were justified as a way to enhance commerce, not restrict it.

THE most ambitious single event in the history of city planning in New York was the so-called Commissioners' Plan of 1811—the mapping of Manhattan's streets in a huge grid, stretching from river to river and from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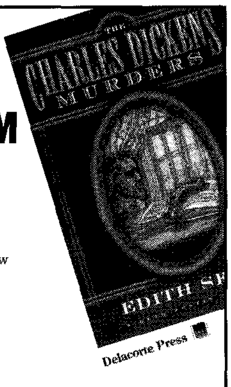

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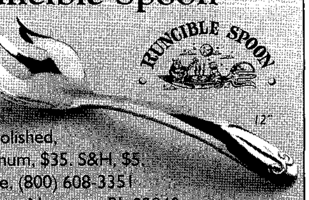

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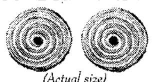
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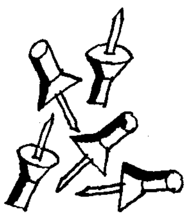
Fourteenth Street, then roughly the northern border of the densely settled portion of the city, to 155th Street. The state-appointed Streets Commission hired a young surveyor, John Randel, Jr., to assist in laying out a plan for the city's inevitable northward expansion. Randal surveyed all eleven thousand four hundred acres of Manhattan and was then told to ram twelve avenues northward, parallel to Manhattan's central axis, and slice identical streets across them every two hundred feet. There were to be no circles, squares, or other punctuation marks of urban design in the manner of, say, the ones that Pierre Charles L'Enfant had sprinkled all over Washington. Such frivolities violated "the principles of economy," the commissioners said. "Like the proposed Erie Canal," Burrows and Wallace write, the grid "gloried in the supremacy of technique over topography. Manhattan's ancient hills, dales, swamps, springs, streams, ponds, forests and meadows—none would be permitted to interrupt its fearful symmetry."



Of course, plenty of things did break the grid—most notably Central Park, which was laid out in mid-century after a bruising political battle. But the Manhattan grid remains one of the most relentlessly single-minded acts of urban planning in the history of American cities, and also one of the most brilliant. In the spirit of New York, it is efficient, but even more in the spirit of New York it is almost neutral in value. The grid may seem cruelly rigid at times, but it also makes possible the extraordinary sight of open views, from river to river. It is less a restrictive cage than it is the largest piece of graph paper in the world, offering a subtle hint of Cartesian order which plays off against New York's determined rambunctiousness.

Burrows and Wallace note that the grid in effect equalized all property. Streets were numbered rather than named, for instance. The grid, in its indifference to topography, foreshadowed the day when Manhattan's huge country estates would fall to real-estate development. All neighborhoods were equal, but that some would eventually turn out to be more equal than others was not the fault of the commissioners, who apologized for not laying out the grid beyond 155th Street, explaining that "it is improbable that (for centuries to come) the grounds north of Harlem Flat will be covered with houses."

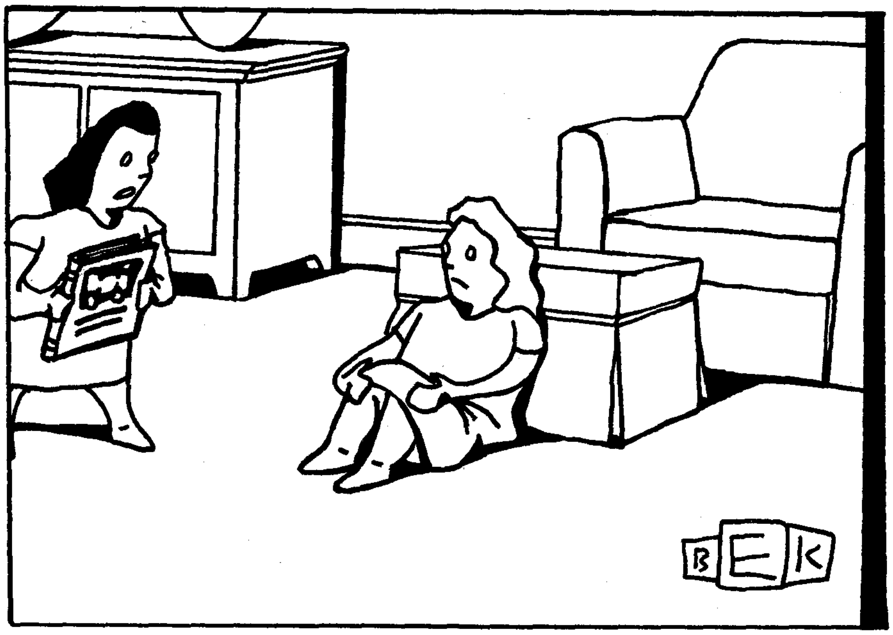
BURROWS and Wallace—who are professors of history at Brooklyn College and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, respectively—have been working on "Gotham" for twenty years. In this first volume of their project they lay out a saga that begins with the Lenape Indians in the sixteenth century and ends with the consolidation of Manhattan and Brooklyn and the creation of Greater New York in 1898. Wallace, whose main contributions are in the nineteenth-century sections, is now working alone on a second volume, which will carry New York through the twentieth century. The collaboration on the first volume was a smooth one, and it yielded an exceptionally readable chronicle that begins with some deft reflections on what might be called the city's primal story, the supposed purchase of Manhattan by the Dutch for twenty-four dollars, and on the origins of the city's longtime nickname, which was conferred on New York by Washington Irving. The original "Gotham" was a medieval village of legend whose inhabitants, depending upon which version of the story you believe, were either foolish, or foolish like a fox.

"Gotham" is a spectacle, a cavalcade, a parade in which people move on and off the stage with astonishing rapidity, and the scene shifts constantly from politics to finance and on to art and social reform and city planning and transportation. The book is at once a history of feminism, of social policy, of marketing, of public works, of health care, of architecture, of government, of religion, of philanthropy, and of culture—which is as it should be, since if it were anything less the authors would not have understood their subject. It is also a history of people, and here it is hard not to feel a slight bit of disappointment. The pace of the narrative makes it difficult to deal with any character in depth, and some of the essential people in the development of New York get short shrift. I think particularly of Frederick Law Olmsted, the co-designer of Central Park, and the industrialist Peter Cooper, who is omnipresent in the narrative but is never quite graspable. Olmsted's story, of course, has been well enough told elsewhere, and it's fair to say that Burrows and Wallace have more than made up for these lapses by bringing to the fore certain figures who are not as well known as they deserve to be, and who, thanks to this book, may now take their proper place. It is no small part of the authors' achievement to have given people like John H. Griscom and Andrew Haswell Green, to name but two of the figures who play major roles here but are barely remembered today, their due.

Griscom was a Quaker physician who held the post of City Inspector in the eighteen-forties and had the temerity to issue a report in which he said that much of the death and disease that befell poor New Yorkers could be avoided if better sanitary and living conditions were provided. Half a century before Jacob Riis became the city's most famous crusader for better living conditions for the poor, Griscom called the basements into which slumlords crammed the poorest tenants "living graves for human beings," and agitated for legislation that would guarantee minimum space and fresh air to every resident of a New York apartment, as well as for the replacement of politically appointed health wardens with nonpolitical medical experts. As a reward, Griscom was relieved of his position at the end of his term.

Andrew Haswell Green, a law partner of Samuel Tilden's, did somewhat better. He was a member of the Central Park Commission and perhaps the first New Yorker to argue that large-scale planning was useful as a means not merely of consolidating political power but of enhancing the quality of life in the city. Green, who was something of a proto-Robert Moses, managed to extend the Park Commission's mandate far beyond Central Park itself to include laying out streets, designing parkways, and overseeing planning for most of upper Manhattan and the Bronx. But his greatest contribution was as the first advocate of an aggressive expansion of the city's borders. Green is, in effect, the spiritual father of the consolidation of Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, the Bronx, and Manhattan into Greater New York.

In a bibliographical note, Burrows and Wallace refer to themselves as "synthesizers," but they sell themselves short when they acknowledge their debts to previous scholars by saying that "it is they who have produced the strands of scholarship that we have woven into a narrative." Happily, "Gotham" is much too well written to be merely an amalgam (although when synthesis is this monumental it is a massive scholarly achievement in itself), and, in fact, Burrows and Wallace have their own ideas about things. What I take to be the book's most important premise, that New York grew powerful by selling information and not just goods, is both original and true. And if the rest of Burrows and Wallace's thesis—the idea



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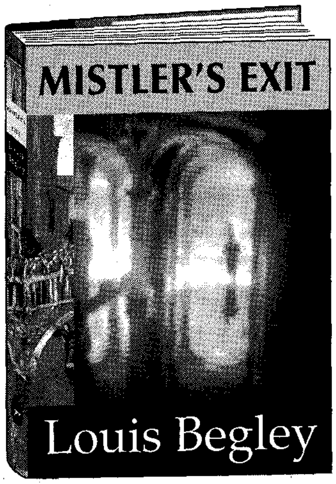

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that the city belongs to no one group, that its lines of power are not easily demarcated, and that it has always been a place that no one fully controls—is not quite as original, it is every bit as essential to an understanding of why New York turned out the way it did.

The city has always been distinguished by a precarious—some might say an enchanted—balance between anarchy and order. In the mid-nineteenth century, as what remained of the old Dutch and British social, political, and economic order attempted to absorb the vast waves of immigrants who poured in, the clash of worlds was physically symbolized by the filth and degradation on the ordered, straight streets—decadence set off against Cartesian purity. The city's architecture, at once utterly banal and wildly exuberant, reflected the same pull of opposites. New York's builders were devoted in equal measure to squeezing in the greatest number of rentable square feet and sheathing their structures in the most ornate garb. The city's commercial and residential buildings were often meaner in their accommodations than those of other cities, but they were much more fun to look at.

In one sense, this architectural dichotomy represented an essential, if unconscious, aspect of New York's developing character. A city obsessed with image, it was always willing to sacrifice creature comforts if appearances could be served. At once pragmatic and flamboyant, New York saw itself, in a sense, as a continuous show. The fascination with appearances underscored the extent to which the city's architecture elevated the public over the private, implicitly giving more to the pedestrian who passed by than to the tenant. New York may not have had a Tuileries or a Champs-Élysées, but its façades—and, by the end of the nineteenth century, its skyscraper tops—collectively constituted a kind of grand public realm, focussed on the life of the streets. And the creation of such monumental public constructions as Central Park and the Brooklyn Bridge, nineteenth-century New York's greatest achievements, gave this intense, determinedly capitalist place what in some ways was the finest public realm of any city in the country.

New York flexed its muscles, grew by leaps and bounds, was by turns awkward and graceful, and didn't bother to digest any stage before it moved on to the next. It was so intently focussed on growth and the future that it paid little heed to its past, and saved virtually none of its landmarks. It would take a long time—well past the midpoint of the twentieth century—before the city gained the maturity to look at its past as an enrichment, not an albatross.

IN the mid-twentieth century, it was easy to be fooled about New York's true nature as the metropolis of information. Since the city was the headquarters for five of the nation's largest oil companies, three of its biggest airlines, and more Fortune 500 corporations than any other place, you could be forgiven for thinking of it as a vast industrial center. But even then it was never more than the front office for a business enterprise whose real work went on somewhere else. The oil companies were in New York because they felt it was more important to be near the source of capital than next to the oil wells; General Motors's financial officers needed to be closer to money than to cars. All of that began to change after the Second World War, when the siren call of the suburbs worked its magic on an inherently conservative and anti-urban corporate class, and the huge industrial companies left, one by one, setting up shop in Stamford, White Plains, or Dallas. In the nineteen-seventies, the corporate exodus elicited a wave of angst about the depletion of the city's economic base. But these departures turned out to matter little, in the long run, to the health of the city, once finance, communications, law, and arts organizations expanded to take the place of the jobs lost. By the nineties, the city had what could only be called an even purer service economy, driven almost entirely by jobs that had nothing whatsoever to do with manufacturing.

And so it is today. New York has become, in a sense, more true to itself. It is a city that was built on intangibles, and the people who deal in ideas and information and money are hunkered down here, making New York more and more dense. They know that proximity to others like them provides energy, that certain things happen faster and better in the metropolis than far away, and so they stay, and New York gets bigger, retaining its character as what Burrows and Wallace call "a city of capital, not a capital city." ◆

BRIEFLY NOTED

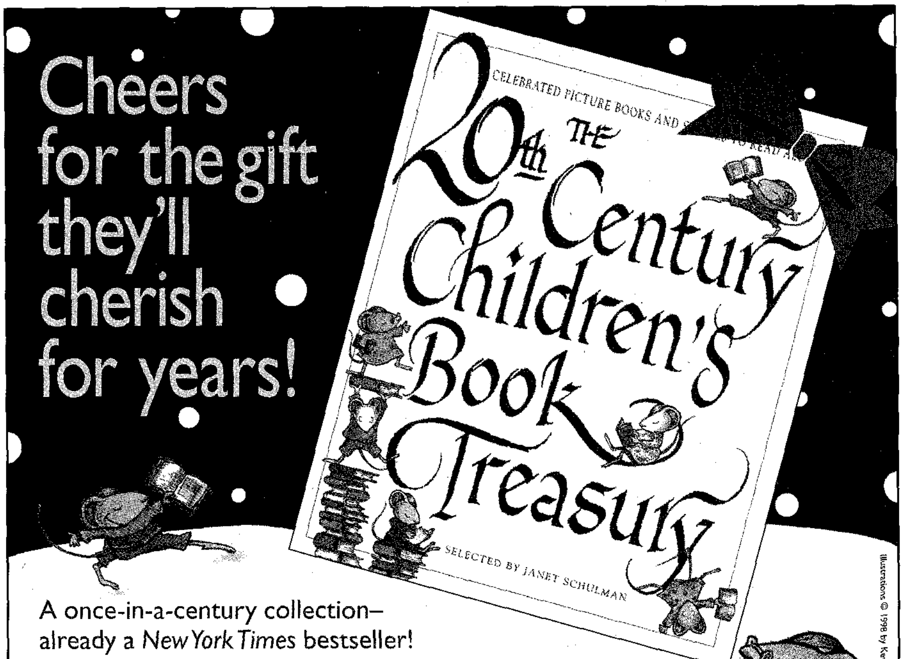
AN ARROW'S FLIGHT, by Mark Merlis (St. Martin's; $24.95). According to prophecy, the Greeks will win the Trojan War only when Achilles' son comes to lead them; the youth is otherwise occupied, however, hustling in the big city ("Pyrrhus, 21, archer's body, reliable, versatile, discreet"). Merlis makes a wonderful match of the Age of Heroes with the pre-AIDS gay seventies. His story of Pyrrhus and Philoctetes ends not in triumph but in weariness and queeny laughter, in a hospital room on a Provincetown-like Isle of Lemnos.

GATES OF FIRE, by Steven Pressfield (Doubleday; $23.95). In the summer of 480 B.C., under attack by the Persian Empire, the cities of Greece cobbled together a small force to buy time, if necessary at the expense of their lives. Led by three hundred Spartans and their king, Leonidas, the Greeks held a narrow mountain pass at Thermopylae for three days against overwhelming Persian numbers. Pressfield's powerful, historically accurate novel explores Spartan society and the nature of courage without ever losing its narrative momentum.

THE GREEKS AND GREEK CIVILIZATION, by Jacob Burckhardt, edited by Oswyn Murray; translated from the German by Sheila Stern (St. Martin's; $27.95). These lectures provide not only a rich overview of Burckhardt's learning but a precious glimpse into the intellectual world of the late nineteenth century. A professor at the University of Basel (where, somewhat to his dismay, he was greatly admired by the young Nietzsche), Burckhardt became a pioneer in cultural history by examining popular attitudes, questions of self-representation, and the role of women and slaves. Here his topics range from the importance of the "agon" in forging individualism to the pessimism and violence that underlay much of Greek culture.

COURTESANS AND FISHCAKES, by James N. Davidson (St. Martin's; $25.95). This erudite history of Athenian drinking, prostitution, and seafood argues that Greeks judged character by the shape of a man's wine cup, that many historical details regarding contemporary sex scandals have been derived from politically motivated lawsuits, and that egalitarian access to the fish market helped establish the concept of democracy. It also suggests that the "fishmadness" that overtook ancient Greece was not only a rich source of humor for its playwrights but history's first consumer fad.

ATHENS, by Christian Meier; translated from the German by Robert and Rita Kimber (Metropolitan; $37.50). This engrossing book, which opens in 480 B.C., traces the evolution of Athenian democracy—a form of government that puzzled and repelled almost everybody else in the civilized world—and connects political and social events to the flowering of Greek art, literature, and philosophy. Meier's work makes evident the importance of Athens in shaping modern America; her self-inflicted downfall carries an implicit warning.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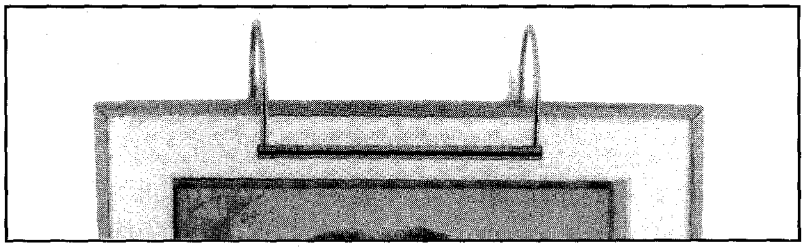
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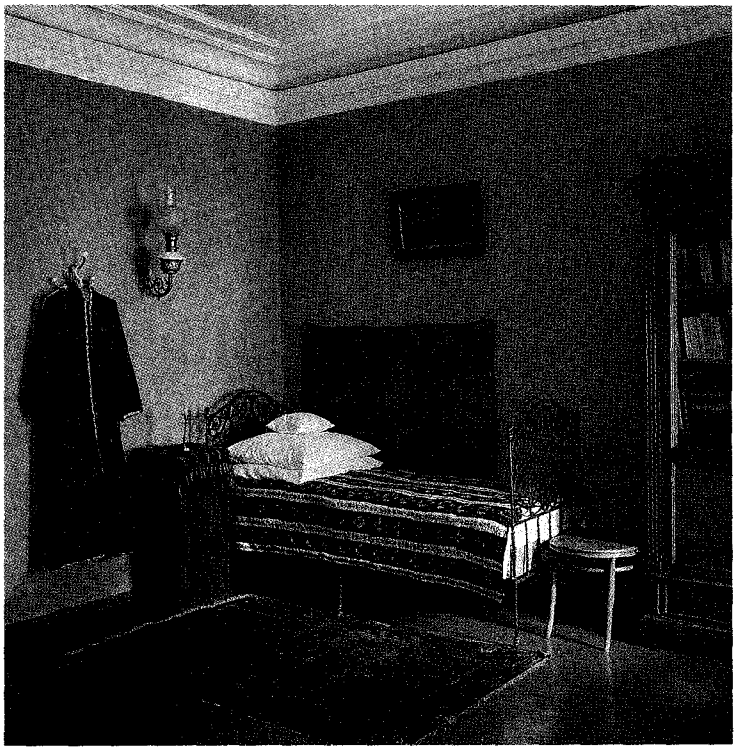
MUSICAL EVENTS

SWAN SONGS

Tchaikovsky without tears.

BY ALEX ROSS

NOT long ago, historians denounced certain embroideries of history in Oliver Stone's film "JFK." Imagine the fuss that might have erupted if a reputable reference work had echoed Stone's speculations word for word—if, say, a new edition of the Columbia Encyclopedia had contained this sentence: "That Kennedy was killed on Lyndon Johnson's orders by right-wing mercenaries cannot be doubted." Fortunately, standards for political history are higher than standards for music history. The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians fastens that table-thumping phrase "cannot be doubted" onto a conspiracy theory about Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, who died in 1893, in St. Petersburg. Although four doctors gave cholera as the cause of his death, the New Grove chose to circulate a Soviet-era rumor that the composer had poisoned himself at the behest of a "court of honor" of former law-school classmates who were scandalized by his homosexuality.



Tchaikovsky's bedroom: His life was not as messy as some believe.

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This penny-dreadful version of Tchaikovsky's death has proved so popular that the scholar Alexander Poznansky recently devoted a whole book—"Tchaikovsky's Last Days"—to refuting it. Poznansky points out that no poison could have duplicated the symptoms of cholera and that the suicide theory requires a vast machinery of coverup. (Dozens of witnesses, acting rather like members of the L.A.P.D. a few years back, must have worked around the clock to manufacture the necessary medical evidence.) Poznansky also shows that Tchaikovsky had no free time during his St. Petersburg visit for any confrontation with powerless

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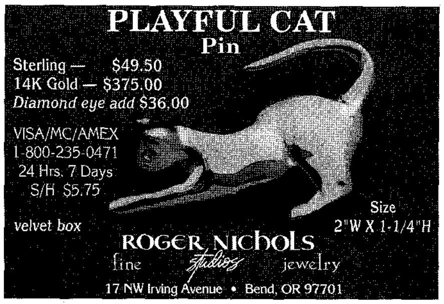

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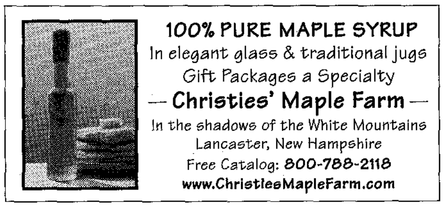

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schoolfellows. He was exulting over the première of his Sixth Symphony and buzzing with plans. The day after he was alleged to have taken poison, he wrote a letter laboriously listing possible dates for a trip to Odessa.

Still, the story won't go away. In the last few years, it has resurfaced in a biography by Anthony Holden and in a widely distributed Tchaikovsky guide by David Nice. British writers seem particularly attached to the "court of honor," perhaps because it reminds them of public-school traditions. Others simply love a good conspiracy theory. But the real impetus for the suicide myth is the music itself, and, in particular, the Adagio Lamentoso of the Sixth Symphony. At the première in St. Petersburg, audiences wondered at this dying roar of sorrow, which ended the symphony as no symphony had ever been ended before. Nine days later, the composer was dead. People began to speculate about the message of the Adagio. "It is a sort of swan song, a presentiment of imminent death," a critic mused. Rumors spread, intertwined with talk of buggery. Did Tchaikovsky contract cholera deliberately? Did his love for a young nephew turn into a fatal obsession? In 1935, Klaus Mann, Thomas Mann's son, published a lurid biographical novel entitled "Pathetic Symphony," which spread the rumors westward. Klaus, whom a friend called "that tragic twerp," remade Tchaikovsky in his own image.

The fictions about Tchaikovsky affected the way people heard his music. The musicologist Richard Taruskin has noted that just after the turn of the century—in the wake of the trial of Oscar Wilde—critics began to describe the composer as "pathological" and "hysterical." They suggested that his manipulations of manly Beethovenian forms were weak and effeminate. In part, this was a refined version of the German bias against Russian music: according to the theoretician Carl Dahlhaus, Tchaikovsky's ideas were "hardly suitable, at least by Beethovenian standards, for establishing a symphonic movement spanning hundreds of measures." Tchaikovsky came to be seen as a late stage in the decadence of tonal music—the point at which theme turned into melody, classicism into kitsch.

Despite the composer's enduring popularity, many postwar performances have repeated the cliché of Tchaikovsky as a cornball neurotic, pounding away at the obvious emotional buttons. Leonard Bernstein was a notorious offender. The ostentatiously grieving tone that Bernstein brought, in his later years, to the "Pathétique" almost drove me away from the composer altogether. I had also picked up the general opprobrium that textbooks heaped on Tchaikovsky: his themes were beautiful but undeveloped; he ran them through mindless sequences; his climaxes all aspired to the condition of the "1812" Overture. I've since realized that Tchaikovsky, more than most composers, rises and falls with the performance. When he is played badly, he sounds banal. When he is played well, he sounds sophisticated. When he is played with real fervor, as he was recently in New York, he makes Carl Dahlhaus sound like a fool.

IT has been a Tchaikovsky-heavy season so far: Valery Gergiev conducted three Tchaikovsky concerts at Carnegie Hall, and at Alice Tully Hall Leon Botstein presented an appendix to his Tchaikovsky festival from last summer at Bard College. Meanwhile, Matthew Bourne's radical revision of "Swan Lake" is running on Broadway. What the Botstein and Gergiev concerts had in common was an interest in overlooked corners of the composer's output—the lighter, more playful pieces, which match the new image of the composer in Poznansky's book. (He was, it turns out, not neurotic or hysterical in the least. He was a proud, aristocratic, libidinous character, who found, despite a disastrous marriage and various silly flings with peasant boys, a rare kind of emotional repose.) One discovery for me was the Concert Fantasia in G for Piano and Orchestra, which Botstein conducted on Halloween night. It is a world apart from the bombastic First Piano Concerto: it is crisp, fresh, and more than a bit goofy. The first movement has an endless cadenza in which the pianist drums noisily in the bass. The second movement, called "Contrasts," is a whirlwind of crosscut juxtapositions, fake endings, and stylized burlesques. At one point, a solemnly surging string line is repeatedly interrupted by a tootling, klezmerlike clarinet: Tchaikovsky seems

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to be laughing at himself. Alan Gampel negotiated the daredevil solo part with finesse, and Botstein drew unusually lively playing from the American Symphony.

At Carnegie, Gergiev led his glorious Kirov Orchestra through the major works of Tchaikovsky's last two years: the "Pathétique," the "Nutcracker," the Third Piano Concerto, the symphonic poem "Voyevoda," and the opera "Iolanta" (in a concert performance with the Kirov Chorus and familiar Kirov singers). To hear all this music within the space of three days was to feel the electricity in Tchaikovsky's mind at the end of his life. He had become both an experimenter and a perfectionist: he was willing to try anything, then cast it off with a shrug if the experiment flopped. He took a dislike to "Voyevoda," a grim piece with a "Götterdämmerung" atmosphere, and tried to destroy the score. The Third Concerto, a confection in the vein of the Concert Fantasia, might have met the same fate if the composer had lived to hear it: although Alexander Toradze coaxed some beauty from the solo part—in particular, a long, shimmering trill with "Pathétique"-like harmonies underneath—the orchestra burbled meaninglessly around him. I doubted at first whether the overfamiliar "Nutcracker" would work any better as a concert piece, but I was won over by an onslaught of exquisite sonorities in the orchestra, from shining wind choirs to beautifully rumbling cellos and basses. "Iolanta" is similar in tone and enjoyed a similar success. It is neglected in opera houses because of its lack of plot—a blind woman falls for a count and regains her sight after a regimen of love duets—but it bewitches the ear with its heightened lyricism, which is free-form and almost impressionistic in effect.

Was Tchaikovsky, in his last years, seeking a new world of sweetness and light? Did he want to Mediterraneanize music, in Nietzsche's phrase? The "Pathétique" breaks the pattern. It reverses Beethoven's narrative of transcendence: it goes from darkness into light and then plunges into a deeper darkness. It's surprising, in a way, that the piece is so well liked, for the jump from the triumph of the third movement to the tragedy of the fourth produces a fearsome kind of musical whiplash. In Gergiev's raging, ragged performance, the transition was almost too much. The final G-major chords of the march movement blared raspily, with Bs and Ds in the horns and trombones overwhelming the root G. (Did Tchaikovsky plan this shaky resolution in his scoring? Only four of the brass and wind instruments play a G.) The B and D pivot easily into the B minor of the Adagio, and Gergiev underlined that connection by leading into the first string chords without pause—thereby cutting off the usual cheers. The finale was dominated by a smoky blur of lower strings, with a clarinet or a bassoon crying out from time to time and a trio of trombones snarling horribly before the end. Gergiev didn't seem to be seeking a beautiful sound; instead, he got something raw, almost brutal.

Richard Taruskin has commented that Tchaikovsky's music "creates community"—that it deals in "concrete imagery explicitly derived from shared human experience." But nothing is less fixed than shared experience: listeners and performers alter the music by the force of the feeling that they bring to it. In the case of the "Pathétique," art and life join in a vicious circle: the music has changed the way that the life has been perceived, and the life has changed the way that the music is heard. Something even more complex has happened in Matthew Bourne's production of "Swan Lake," in which the familiar strains of Tchaikovsky's score seem utterly transformed by a voluptuous, savage choreography of male swans. Has a staid old work been recharged by contemporary energies? Or has a clever contemporary notion drawn sustenance from grand nineteenth-century passions? God only knows—but it's an astounding spectacle.

It's impossible to imagine how Tchaikovsky might have reacted to his more adventurous latter-day interpreters, but he was aware of the potentially disorienting, hallucinatory effects of his music. Two days after the première of the "Pathétique," he wrote to his publisher, "Something strange is going on with this symphony! It is not that it wasn't liked, but it has caused some bewilderment. As far as I am concerned, I am prouder of it than of any of my other compositions." In apparent haste, he added, "But we shall speak of this soon, for I will be in Moscow on Saturday." ◆

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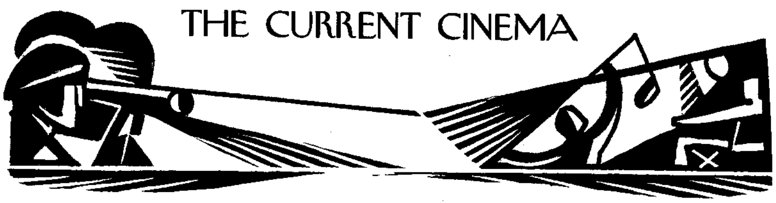


LEAVING RIO

Women breaking out, in a bedraggled Brazil and a bluesy Manhattan.

BY DAVID DENBY

At the beginning of the moving Brazilian film "Central Station," we are caught by the face of the actress Fernanda Montenegro. Allowing her facial muscles to sag, Montenegro, a beautiful, aristocratic woman, remakes herself as a shopworn Medusa: that mixture of experience and chagrin could turn anyone to stone. Montenegro, sixty-seven, and a major star in Brazil, plays Dora, whose sense of reality has contracted so bitterly that she can enjoy no greater emotion than disgust. Dora doesn't want life to mean anything, not for herself or for anyone else; she punishes a foolish world by doing nothing with her hair and wearing the same dun-colored clothes day after day. Yet when she's outraged her black eyes snap wide open. Montenegro is a proud, volatile performer, and though we can't tell what, exactly, was alive inside her Dora long ago we know it had to be something strong. A retired schoolteacher, Dora has the peculiar, weary knowingness of someone who has seen every trick in the book. At the central railroad station in Rio de Janeiro, she sets up a desk and writes letters for illiterate people. It is not a gentle place: a teen-ager who steals a little tape recorder and then runs for it gets shot to death on the tracks without a murmur of protest from anyone.

At Dora's desk, however, people present themselves with a radiant desire to communicate something: they want to see a relative, to get back in touch with a lover, to meet a girl. In these scenes, the director, Walter Salles, uses people he found at the station; they offer themselves to the camera eagerly, without the wariness of professionals—at which point they run into Montenegro's ridicule. At home in her cramped apartment, Dora reads the letters aloud to an affable neighbor (Marília Pêra). Laughing over the delusions of the writers, she tears the letters up or throws them in a drawer—she wants to save people from the bad taste of their emotions. One of the letters she holds on to was written by a woman to her absent husband, a drunkard. When the woman suddenly dies, the dark-eyed nine-year-old boy she had in tow, Josué (Vinicius de Oliveira), takes up residence on the floor of the station, among the hustlers and scroungers. Dora

Montenegro, the proud heroine of "Central Station."

LILLIAN BIRNBAUM

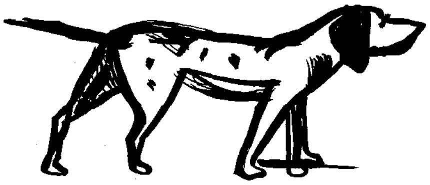
is stuck; she can either let Josué drift downward or try to help out. The decision she makes seems to violate everything in her nature. But the boy wants to see his missing father, and something in that desire stirs her. They take to the road, a quarrelsome, unresolved couple.

"Central Station," which moves convincingly from utter negation to guarded optimism, will inevitably be hailed as "a triumph of the human spirit." But the picture is much better than the clichés it will call forth. It's shrewd and tough and observant, and emotional in a big-hearted way that has practically disappeared from American movies. Walter Salles's work in this movie doesn't have the brutal excitement of Hector Babenco's heartbreaking 1981 masterpiece "Pixote," which is also about an abandoned boy in Brazil. Salles's colors aren't as bright, his moods not as extreme. He's more placid than Babenco; he appears drawn by temperament to reconciliation rather than to bitter irony. What distinguishes Salles is his sure, detailed sense of what someone caught in the flux of modern life might be feeling—the churning emotions of the private person adrift in the anonymous crowd. In interviews, he places himself not within Brazilian filmmaking traditions but in the line of such Italian neorealists as Rossellini and De Sica. Like the ravaged postwar Italian cities in "Shoeshine" and "The Bicycle Thief," the railroad station and Dora's ashy life in Rio represent modern society at its most desperate and futile. The rest of the movie asks, "What else is there?"

God knows, the humanist tradition needs a little reviving, and messy, big Brazil, with its folk-religion piety, its bedraggled soulfulness, and its careless beauty, may be the best place for rebirth. "Central Station" turns into an intimate epic about the delivery of a letter: Dora and Josué climb into a bus, and, as Salles fills up the screen with the sky and plains of the Sertão (it looks like the American West), Rio's spirit of callous indifference fades away. The two unhappy travellers are practically hoboes; they lose their money, they lose their rides, they get stuck in towns that consist of little more than a gas station with a restaurant attached, but life opens up for them. How strange Brazil looks to American eyes! On the walls of the restaurants, naïve religious scenes are painted right into the stucco. The country seems only half finished—a place in which modernization keeps getting jostled aside by Catholic ritual and a surviving frontier spirit. People move around, get lost, or "disappear into the wilderness." For a long time, Dora and Josué go from nowhere to nowhere.

The two of them become friends (there would be no movie if they didn't), but they do not have an easy time of it. Young Vinicius de Oliveira, whom Salles met at a Rio airport (he was a shoeshine boy hustling a meal), has a brilliant smile and handsome features, and he's quick, sometimes startlingly intelligent. Salles says that he hired Oliveira because he had attained street smarts without losing his innocence. In the movie, he's a little chipper for a boy whose mother has just died; still, a bright, tough, good-looking kid who's not quite an actor is easier to take than a professional tearjerker. Dora is amused by Josué: he expresses his affection for her by acting like a baby macho. (At one point, like a pimp turning out his woman, he buys her a colorful print dress.) He's just as smart as she is, and that amuses her, too, though it also causes trouble for her. Josué makes her feel guilty and loveless, and she goes through spasms of loathing for him, and tries to dump him. Montenegro has a particular skill shared by great actresses as disparate as Bette Davis, Jeanne Moreau, and Giulietta Masina—an ability to alter her moods abruptly, from mask-of-tragedy woe to childish pleasure, without apparent calculation. Spontaneity of that power can be attained, perhaps, only by an equal devotion to acting and to life. Even Montenegro's casual remarks arrive edged and weighted; the hard living of many years seems to crowd in behind her emotions, and her scorn is like laughter—we trust it.

Late in the search for Josué's father, Dora and the boy get caught up in a religious pilgrimage in some obscure small town. It is the most turbulent and mysterious moment in the film. Separated from the boy, her feelings all mixed up, Dora wanders into the House of Miracles, where family pictures and messages to the saints are pinned to the walls, and, suddenly, overwhelmed by the smell of incense and burning wax, she faints. When she wakes up, she's transformed. If Dora was earlier devoted to preventing messages from reaching their destination, she is now devoted to getting them through. Sending a letter, she realizes, resembles making a prayer. Salles develops this idea without false hope, and "Central Station," like a runner surging across the finish line, ends in a burst of generous emotion. It's all right, I think, just this time, to cry.



The sinews in Holly Hunter's arms and neck tighten like cables hauled in by a winch; she's all wired up, and in "Living Out Loud," Richard LaGravanese's lovely mood piece about loneliness in Manhattan, she uses the tension as a source of comedy. The movie hits an early high when Hunter, abandoned by her husband and alone in her Fifth Avenue co-op at night, runs through her fantasies and fears in a breathless internal whisper. Since she doesn't have to speak, Hunter does a rabbity, detailed commentary with her face on what she's thinking: it's the kind of classic private moment that winds up being shown on Oscar night. Hunter's divorcée lives in fantasy, relieved now and then by outbursts of drunken or stoned candor; she's a woman who has always accommodated herself to everyone else and has to learn how to stop. She finds what she wants in long conversations with her elevator man, whom Danny DeVito, speaking calmly and quietly, turns into a major character—a failure who hasn't given up hope for himself. LaGravanese, a successful screenwriter working for the first time as a director, takes some surprising risks. He plays with overlapping scenes of fantasy and reality, and tosses in an episode at a lesbian disco that's right out of a Broadway musical. The picture is small, but not mousy. Based loosely on two Chekhov stories, "Living Out Loud" is about the ways that unlikely people reach out to one another, and it features a lyrical Manhattan, warmer than Woody Allen's, in which friends drop into the same night club several times a week, chat, and listen to performers like Queen Latifah sing easy blues about the strange predicaments of life. ♦

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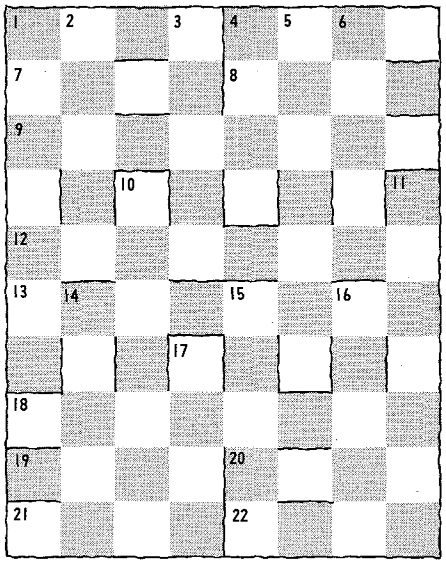


ACROSS

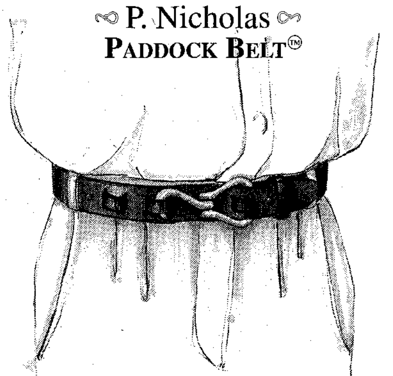
1 Start to catch pitches and bounders (4)
4 Among the ears, give rise to sounds in the cornfield (4)
7 Cuckoo tail touched the ground (4)
8 A wild owl is inexplicably missing (4)
9 Beads surrounding Emily's fragrant plant (8)
12 A titled woman carries plot in Eliot book (4,4)
13 Overindulge movie dog wearing fancy dress (2,2,4)
18 Hordes backing an expert on milk (8)
19 I'm in surprisingly revealing skirt (4)
20 N.Y. player has left tuna sandwich (4)
21 War god offers ship in myth (4)
22 Reportedly use some sheep (4)

DOWN

1 Worry about old horse's slaughter (7)
2 In hearing, permitted to be heard (5)
3 Stop lying about a source of power (5)
4 Visited California, then Maine (4)
5 Familiar with enemy uprising after a battle (5,2)
6 Term conveying "large planet" (5)
10 Catch hosts skinny dipping? (7)
11 Renters catch up with workers (7)
14 Mid-October rain ruined radio station sign (2,3)
15 Occasion, say, for cooking herb (5)
16 Where's first healthy sea creature? (5)
17 Group beginning to tour carnival city (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 67 appears on page 117. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.



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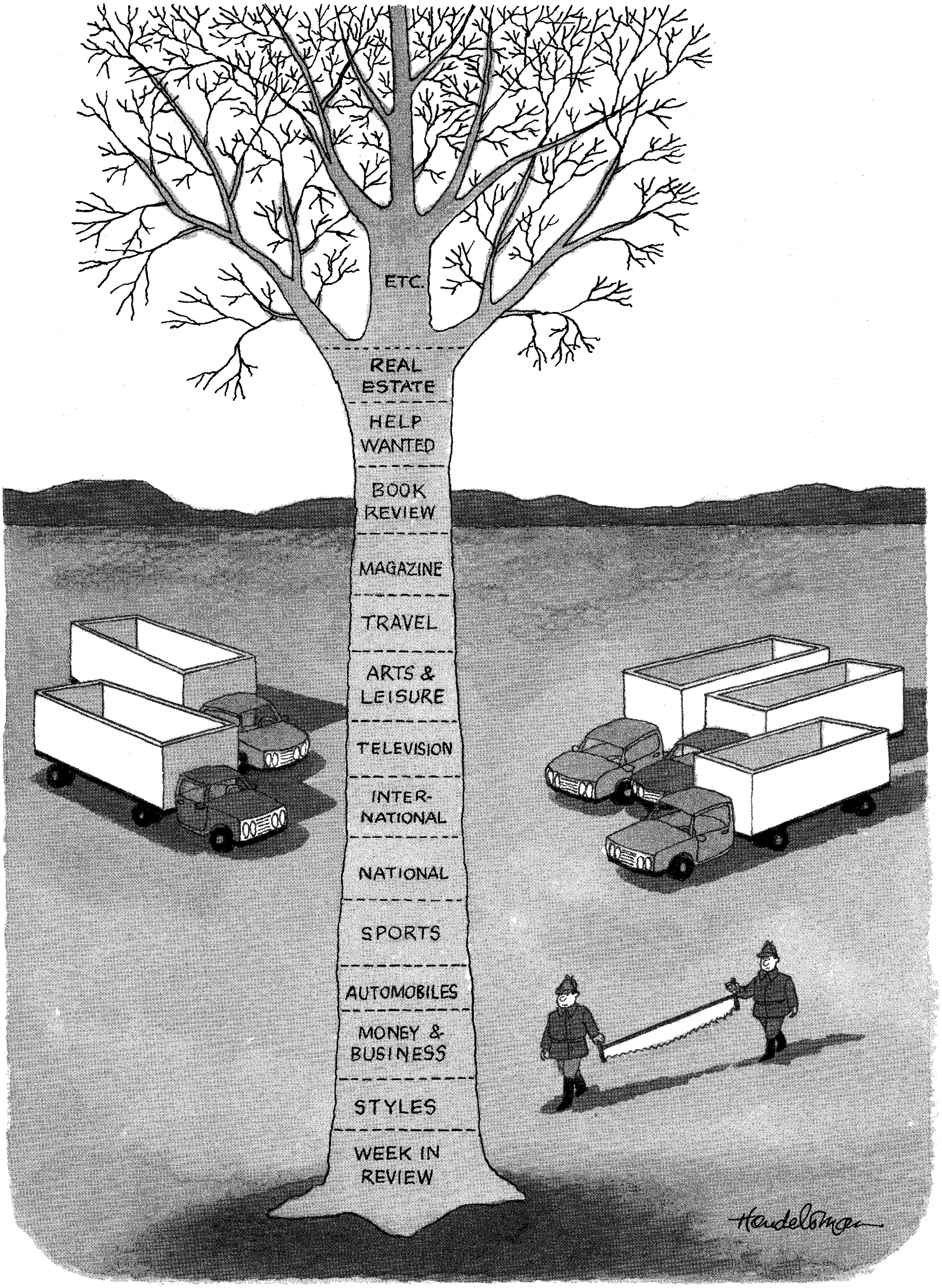
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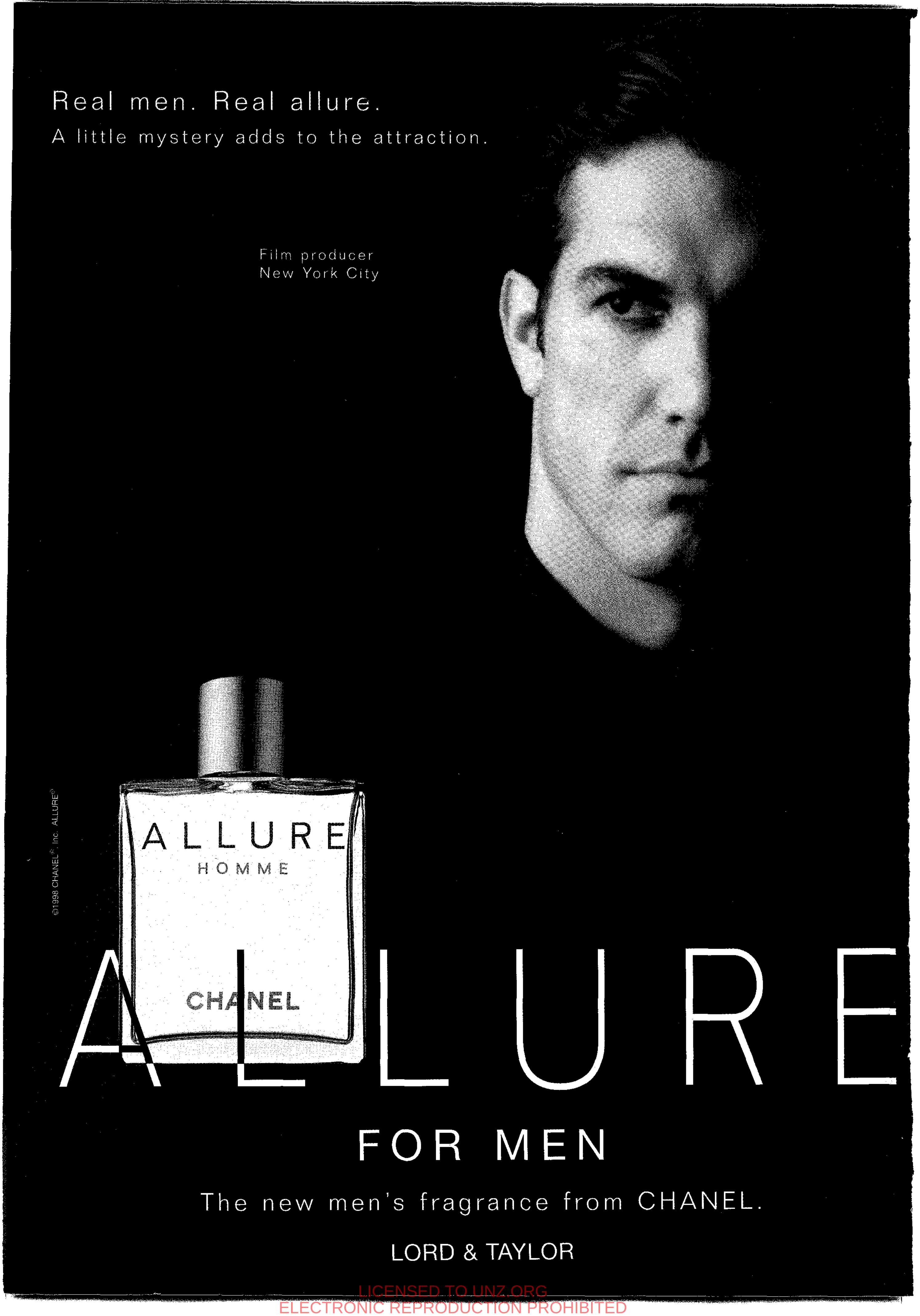

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